

William Shakespeare

THE MERCHANT
OF VENICE

EDITED BY KENNETH MYRICK

The Signet Classic Shakespeare
GENERAL EDITOR: SYLVAN BARNET

*Revised and Updated
Bibliography*



A SIGNET CLASSIC

NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY

NEW YORK AND SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO
CC-0 Kashmir Research Institute. Digitized by eGangotri

COPYRIGHT © 1965 BY KENNETH MYRICK
COPYRIGHT © 1963 BY SYLVAN BARNET
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



SIGNET CLASSIC TRADEMARK REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES
REGISTERED TRADEMARK—MARCA REGISTRADA
HECHO EN CHICAGO, U.S.A.

SIGNET, SIGNET CLASSIC, MENTOR, PLUME, MERIDIAN AND NAL
BOOKS are published *in the United States* by
New American Library,
1633 Broadway, New York, New York 10019,
in Canada by The New American Library of Canada Limited,
81 Mack Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1L 1M8

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CC-0 Kashmir Research Institute. Digitized by eGangotri

Contents

SHAKESPEARE: PREFATORY REMARKS	vii
INTRODUCTION	xxi
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	41
TEXTUAL NOTE	139
A NOTE ON THE SOURCES OF <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	142
COMMENTARIES	
Nicholas Rowe: from <i>The Works of Mr. William Shakespear</i>	145
William Hazlitt: from <i>Characters of Shakespear's Plays</i>	146
Anonymous: " <i>Henry Irving's Shylock</i> "	152
Elmer Edgar Stoll: from <i>Shylock</i>	157
SUGGESTED REFERENCES	173

Shakespeare: Prefatory Remarks

Between the record of his baptism in Stratford on 26 April 1564 and the record of his burial in Stratford on 25 April 1616, some forty documents name Shakespeare, and many others name his parents, his children, and his grandchildren. More facts are known about William Shakespeare than about any other playwright of the period except Ben Jonson. The facts should, however, be distinguished from the legends. The latter, inevitably more engaging and better known, tell us that the Stratford boy killed a calf in high style, poached deer and rabbits, and was forced to flee to London, where he held horses outside a playhouse. These traditions are only traditions; they may be true, but no evidence supports them, and it is well to stick to the facts.

Mary Arden, the dramatist's mother, was the daughter of a substantial landowner; about 1557 she married John Shakespeare, who was a glove-maker and trader in various farm commodities. In 1557 John Shakespeare was a member of the Council (the governing body of Stratford), in 1558 a constable of the borough, in 1561 one of the two town chamberlains, in 1565 an alderman (entitling him to the appellation "Mr."), in 1568 high bailiff—the town's highest political office, equivalent to mayor. After 1577, for an unknown reason he drops out of local politics. The birthday of William Shakespeare, the eldest son of this locally prominent man, is unrecorded; but the Stratford parish register records that the infant was baptized on 26 April 1564. (It is quite possible that he was born on 23

April, but this date has probably been assigned by tradition because it is the date on which, fifty-two years later, he died.) The attendance records of the Stratford grammar school of the period are not extant, but it is reasonable to assume that the son of a local official attended the school and received substantial training in Latin. The masters of the school from Shakespeare's seventh to fifteenth years held Oxford degrees; the Elizabethan curriculum excluded mathematics and the natural sciences but taught a good deal of Latin rhetoric, logic, and literature. On 27 November 1582 a marriage license was issued to Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. The couple had a child in May, 1583. Perhaps the marriage was necessary, but perhaps the couple had earlier engaged in a formal "troth plight" which would render their children legitimate even if no further ceremony were performed. In 1585 Anne Hathaway bore Shakespeare twins.

That Shakespeare was born is excellent; that he married and had children is pleasant; but that we know nothing about his departure from Stratford to London, or about the beginning of his theatrical career, is lamentable and must be admitted. We would gladly sacrifice details about his children's baptism for details about his earliest days on the stage. Perhaps the poaching episode is true (but it is first reported almost a century after Shakespeare's death), or perhaps he first left Stratford to be a schoolteacher, as another tradition holds; perhaps he was moved by

Such wind as scatters young men through the world,
To seek their fortunes further than at home
Where small experience grows.

In 1592, thanks to the cantankerousness of Robert Greene, a rival playwright and a pamphleteer, we have our first reference, a snarling one, to Shakespeare as an actor and playwright. Greene warns those of his own educated friends who wrote for the theater against an actor who has presumed to turn playwright:

There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers,

that with his *tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and being an absolute Johannes-factotum is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.

The reference to the player, as well as the allusion to Aesop's crow (who strutted in borrowed plumage, as an actor struts in fine words not his own), makes it clear that by this date Shakespeare had both acted and written. That Shakespeare is meant is indicated not only by "Shake-scene" but by the parody of a line from one of Shakespeare's plays, *3 Henry VI*: "O, tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide." If Shakespeare in 1592 was prominent enough to be attacked by an envious dramatist, he probably had served an apprenticeship in the theater for at least a few years.

In any case, by 1592 Shakespeare had acted and written, and there are a number of subsequent references to him as an actor: documents indicate that in 1598 he is a "principal comedian," in 1603 a "principal tragedian," in 1608 he is one of the "men players." The profession of actor was not for a gentleman, and it occasionally drew the scorn of university men who resented writing speeches for persons less educated than themselves, but it was respectable enough: players, if prosperous, were in effect members of the bourgeoisie, and there is nothing to suggest that Stratford considered William Shakespeare less than a solid citizen. When, in 1596, the Shakespeares were granted a coat of arms, the grant was made to Shakespeare's father, but probably William Shakespeare (who the next year bought the second-largest house in town) had arranged the matter on his own behalf. In subsequent transactions he is occasionally styled a gentleman.

Although in 1593 and 1594 Shakespeare published two narrative poems dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, and may well have written most or all of his sonnets in the middle nineties, Shakespeare's literary activity seems to have been almost entirely devoted to the theater. (It may be significant that the two narrative poems were written in years

when the plague closed the theaters for several months.) In 1594 he was a charter member of a theatrical company called the Chamberlain's Men (which in 1603 changed its name to the King's Men); until he retired to Stratford (about 1611, apparently), he was with this remarkably stable company. From 1599 the company acted primarily at the Globe Theatre, in which Shakespeare held a one-tenth interest. Other Elizabethan dramatists are known to have acted, but no other is known also to have been entitled to a share in the profits of the playhouse.

Shakespeare's first eight published plays did not have his name on them, but this is not remarkable; the most popular play of the sixteenth century, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, went through many editions without naming Kyd, and Kyd's authorship is known only because a book on the profession of acting happens to quote (and attribute to Kyd) some lines on the interest of Roman emperors in the drama. What is remarkable is that after 1598 Shakespeare's name commonly appears on printed plays—some of which are not his. Another indication of his popularity comes from Francis Meres, author of *Paladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury* (1598): in this anthology of snippets accompanied by an essay on literature, many playwrights are mentioned, but Shakespeare's name occurs more often than any other, and Shakespeare is the only playwright whose plays are listed.

From his acting, playwriting, and share in a theater, Shakespeare seems to have made considerable money. He put it to work, making substantial investments in Stratford real estate. When he made his will (less than a month before he died), he sought to leave his property intact to his descendants. Of small bequests to relatives and to friends (including three actors, Richard Burbage, John Heminges, and Henry Condell), that to his wife of the second-best bed has provoked the most comment; perhaps it was the bed the couple had slept in, the best being reserved for visitors. In any case, had Shakespeare not excepted it, the bed would have gone (with the rest of his household possessions) to his daughter and her husband. On 25 April 1616 he was buried within the chancel of the church at Stratford. An unattractive monument to his

memory, placed on a wall near the grave, says he died on 23 April. Over the grave itself are the lines, perhaps by Shakespeare, that (more than his literary fame) have kept his bones undisturbed in the crowded burial ground where old bones were often dislodged to make way for new:

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be the man that spares these stones
And cursed be he that moves my bones.

Thirty-seven plays, as well as some nondramatic poems, are held to constitute the Shakespeare canon. The dates of composition of most of the works are highly uncertain, but there is often evidence of a *terminus a quo* (starting point) and/or a *terminus ad quem* (terminal point) that provides a framework for intelligent guessing. For example, *Richard II* cannot be earlier than 1595, the publication date of some material to which it is indebted; *The Merchant of Venice* cannot be later than 1598, the year Francis Meres mentioned it. Sometimes arguments for a date hang on an alleged topical allusion, such as the lines about the unseasonable weather in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II.i.81-117, but such an allusion (if indeed it is an allusion) can be variously interpreted, and in any case there is always the possibility that a topical allusion was inserted during a revision, years after the composition of a play. Dates are often attributed on the basis of style, and although conjectures about style usually rest on other conjectures, sooner or later one must rely on one's literary sense. There is no real proof, for example, that *Othello* is not as early as *Romeo and Juliet*, but one feels *Othello* is later, and because the first record of its performance is 1604, one is glad enough to set its composition at that date and not push it back into Shakespeare's early years. The following chronology, then, is as much indebted to informed guesswork and sensitivity as it is to fact. The dates, necessarily imprecise, indicate something like a scholarly consensus.

PLAYS

1588-93	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
1588-94	<i>Love's Labor's Lost</i>
1590-91	<i>2 Henry VI</i>
1590-91	<i>3 Henry VI</i>
1591-92	<i>1 Henry VI</i>
1592-93	<i>Richard III</i>
1592-94	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
1593-94	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
1593-95	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
1594-96	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
1595	<i>Richard II</i>
1594-96	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
1596-97	<i>King John</i>
1596-97	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
1597	<i>1 Henry IV</i>
1597-98	<i>2 Henry IV</i>
1598-99	<i>Henry V</i>
1598-1600	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
1599	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
1599-1600	<i>As You Like It</i>
1599-1600	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
1600-01	<i>Hamlet</i>
1597-1601	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
1601-02	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
1602-04	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
1603-04	<i>Othello</i>
1604	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
1605-06	<i>King Lear</i>
1605-06	<i>Macbeth</i>
1606-07	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
1605-08	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
1607-09	<i>Coriolanus</i>
1608-09	<i>Pericles</i>
1609-10	<i>Cymbeline</i>
1610-11	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
1611	<i>The Tempest</i>
1612-13	<i>Henry VIII</i>

eight hundred spectators standing in the yard around the projecting elevated stage and some fifteen hundred additional spectators seated in the three roofed galleries. The stage, protected by a "shadow" or "heavens" or roof, is entered by two doors; behind the doors is the "tiring house" (attiring house, i.e., dressing room), and above the doors is some sort of gallery that may sometimes hold spectators but that can be used (for example) as the bedroom from which Romeo—according to a stage direction in one text—"goeth down." Some evidence suggests that a throne can be lowered onto the platform stage, perhaps from the "shadow"; certainly characters can descend from the stage through a trap or traps into the cellar or "hell." Sometimes this space beneath the platform accommodates a sound-effects man or musician (in *Antony and Cleopatra* "music of the hautboys is under the stage") or an actor (in *Hamlet* the "Ghost cries under the stage"). Most characters simply walk on and off, but because there is no curtain in front of the platform, corpses will have to be carried off (Hamlet must lug Polonius' guts into the neighbor room), or will have to fall at the rear, where the curtain on the alcove or booth can be drawn to conceal them.

Such may have been the so-called "public theater." Another kind of theater, called the "private theater" because its much greater admission charge limited its audience to the wealthy or the prodigal, must be briefly mentioned. The private theater was basically a large room, entirely roofed and therefore artificially illuminated, with a stage at one end. In 1576 one such theater was established in Blackfriars, a Dominican priory in London that had been suppressed in 1538 and confiscated by the Crown and thus was not under the city's jurisdiction. All the actors in the Blackfriars theater were boys about eight to thirteen years old (in the public theaters similar boys played female parts; a boy Lady Macbeth played to a man Macbeth). This private theater had a precarious existence, and ceased operations in 1584. In 1596 James Burbage, who had already made theatrical history by building the Theatre, began to construct a second Blackfriars theater. He died

in 1597, and for several years this second Blackfriars theater was used by a troupe of boys, but in 1608 two of Burbage's sons and five other actors (including Shakespeare) became joint operators of the theater, using it in the winter when the open-air Globe was unsuitable. Perhaps such a smaller theater, roofed, artificially illuminated, and with a tradition of a courtly audience, exerted an influence on Shakespeare's late plays.

Performances in the private theaters may well have had intermissions during which music was played, but in the public theaters the action was probably uninterrupted, flowing from scene to scene almost without a break. Actors would enter, speak, exit, and others would immediately enter and establish (if necessary) the new locale by a few properties and by words and gestures. Here are some samples of Shakespeare's scene painting:

This is Illyria, lady.

Well, this is the Forest of Arden.

This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

On the other hand, it is a mistake to conceive of the Elizabethan stage as bare. Although Shakespeare's Chorus in *Henry V* calls the stage an "unworthy scaffold" and urges the spectators to "eke out our performance with your mind," there was considerable spectacle. The last act of *Macbeth*, for example, has five stage directions calling for "drum and colors," and another sort of appeal to the eye is indicated by the stage direction "Enter Macduff, with Macbeth's head." Some scenery and properties may have been substantial; doubtless a throne was used, and in one play of the period we encounter this direction: "Hector takes up a great piece of rock and casts at Ajax, who tears up a young tree by the roots and assails Hector." The matter is of some importance, and will be glanced at again in the next section.

The Texts of Shakespeare

Though eighteen of his plays were published during his lifetime, Shakespeare seems never to have supervised their publication. There is nothing unusual here; when a playwright sold a play to a theatrical company he surrendered his ownership of it. Normally a company would not publish the play, because to publish it meant to allow competitors to acquire the piece. Some plays, however, did get published: apparently treacherous actors sometimes pieced together a play for a publisher, sometimes a company in need of money sold a play, and sometimes a company allowed a play to be published that no longer drew audiences. That Shakespeare did not concern himself with publication, then, is scarcely remarkable; of his contemporaries only Ben Jonson carefully supervised the publication of his own plays. In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, John Heminges and Henry Condell (two senior members of Shakespeare's company, who had performed with him for about twenty years) collected his plays—published and unpublished—into a large volume, commonly called the First Folio. (A folio is a volume consisting of sheets that have been folded once, each sheet thus making two leaves, or four pages. The eighteen plays published during Shakespeare's lifetime had been issued one play per volume in small books called quartos. Each sheet in a quarto has been folded twice, making four leaves, or eight pages.) The First Folio contains thirty-six plays; a thirty-seventh, *Pericles*, though not in the Folio, is regarded as canonical. Heminges and Condell suggest in an address "To the great variety of readers" that the republished plays are presented in better form than in the quartos: "Before you were abused with diverse stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors that exposed them; even those, are now offered to your view cured and perfect of their limbs, and all the rest absolute in their numbers, as he [i.e., Shakespeare] conceived them."

Whoever was assigned to prepare the texts for publication in the First Folio seems to have taken his job seri-

ously and yet not to have performed it with uniform care. The sources of the texts seem to have been, in general, good unpublished copies or the best published copies. The first play in the collection, *The Tempest*, is divided into acts and scenes, has unusually full stage directions and descriptions of spectacle, and concludes with a list of the characters, but the editor was not able (or willing) to present all of the succeeding texts so fully dressed. Later texts occasionally show signs of carelessness: in one scene of *Much Ado About Nothing* the names of actors, instead of characters, appear as speech prefixes, as they had in the quarto, which the Folio reprints; proofreading throughout the Folio is spotty and apparently was done without reference to the printer's copy; the pagination of *Hamlet* jumps from 156 to 257.

A modern editor of Shakespeare must first select his copy; no problem if the play exists only in the Folio, but a considerable problem if the relationship between a quarto and the Folio—or an early quarto and a later one—is unclear. When an editor has chosen what seems to him to be the most authoritative text or texts for his copy, he has not done with making decisions. First of all, he must reckon with Elizabethan spelling. If he is not producing a facsimile, he probably modernizes it, but ought he to preserve the old form of words that apparently were pronounced quite unlike their modern forms—"lanthorn" "alablaster"? If he preserves these forms, is he really preserving Shakespeare's forms or perhaps those of a compositor in the printing house? What is one to do when one finds "lanthorn" and "lantern" in adjacent lines? (The editors of this series in general, but not invariably, assume that words should be spelled in their modern form.) Elizabethan punctuation, too, presents problems. For example in the First Folio, the only text for the play, Macbeth rejects his wife's idea that he can wash the blood from his hand:

no: this my Hand will rather
The multitudinous Seas incarnardine,
Making the Greene one, Red.

Obviously an editor will remove the superfluous capitals, and he will probably alter the spelling to "incarnadine," but will he leave the comma before "red," letting Macbeth speak of the sea as "the green one," or will he (like most modern editors) remove the comma and thus have Macbeth say that his hand will make the ocean *uniformly* red?

An editor will sometimes have to change more than spelling or punctuation. Macbeth says to his wife:

I dare do all that may become a man,
Who dares no more, is none.

For two centuries editors have agreed that the second line is unsatisfactory, and have emended "no" to "do": "Who dares do more is none." But when in the same play Ross says that fearful persons

floate vpon a wilde and violent Sea
Each way, and moue,

need "move" be emended to "none," as it often is, on the hunch that the compositor misread the manuscript? The editors of the Signet Classic Shakespeare have restrained themselves from making abundant emendations. In their minds they hear Dr. Johnson on the dangers of emending: "I have adopted the Roman sentiment, that it is more honorable to save a citizen than to kill an enemy." Some departures (in addition to spelling, punctuation, and lineation) from the copy text have of course been made, but the original readings are listed in a note following the play, so that the reader can evaluate them for himself.

The editors of the Signet Classic Shakespeare, following tradition, have added line numbers and in many cases act and scene divisions as well as indications of locale at the beginning of scenes. The Folio divided most of the plays into acts and some into scenes. Early eighteenth-century editors increased the divisions. These divisions, which provide a convenient way of referring to passages in the plays, have been retained, but when not in the text chosen as the basis for the Signet Classic text they are

enclosed in square brackets [] to indicate that they are editorial additions. Similarly, although no play of Shakespeare's published during his lifetime was equipped with indications of locale at the heads of scene divisions, locales have here been added in square brackets for the convenience of the reader, who lacks the information afforded to spectators by costumes, properties, and gestures. The spectator can tell at a glance he is in the throne room, but without an editorial indication the reader may be puzzled for a while. It should be mentioned, incidentally, that there are a few authentic stage directions—perhaps Shakespeare's, perhaps a prompter's—that suggest locales; for example, "Enter Brutus in his orchard," and "They go up into the Senate house." It is hoped that the bracketed additions provide the reader with the sort of help provided in these two authentic directions, but it is equally hoped that the reader will remember that the stage was not loaded with scenery.

No editor during the course of his work can fail to recollect some words Heminges and Condell prefixed to the Folio:

It had been a thing, we confess, worthy to have been wished, that the author himself had lived to have set forth and overseen his own writings. But since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envy his friends the office of their care and pain to have collected and published them.

Nor can an editor, after he has done his best, forget Heminges and Condell's final words: "And so we leave you to other of his friends, whom if you need can be your guides. If you need them not, you can lead yourselves, and others. And such readers we wish him."

SYLVAN BARNET
Tufts University

Introduction

The Merchant of Venice is the earliest of three superb comedies in which Shakespeare has set a generous and clear-sighted woman in sharp contrast to a no less unusual, but markedly unsocial man. From beginning to end, Portia and Shylock—like Rosalind and Jaques in *As You Like It* and Viola and Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*—remain poles apart. It is significant that Portia in her greatest scene, and the two other heroines in nearly all of their scenes, are disguised as men. Only the audience and one confidante share their secret. Knowing it, the spectators naturally tend to center their interest in them and to view the play through their eyes. Portia, Rosalind, and Viola tend to overshadow their lovers, not because, as is often asserted, the men are not worthy of them, but because of their fascinating double roles.

Their respective opponents—Shylock, Jaques, and Malvolio—are all vivid, but strange and isolated figures. None is an actual villain, but each has been accurately called an *anti-hero*.

On the Elizabethan stage, it was probably easier for Portia to take the leading role than it is in the modern theater. In Shakespeare's company there was a better balance than in modern times, when the star actor tends to overshadow all the others. The lady's handicap is especially formidable when the star is, like Sir Henry Irving, both the manager of the theater and even the director of the troupe. Ellen Terry was at her best, she said, when she played against Irving, but she could not be the central figure of the play that Portia is meant to be. At times in

the nineteenth century, Shylock so overshadowed everyone else that the beautiful final act was omitted entirely.

It is pretty clear today that when Jaques or Malvolio is allowed to usurp the leading role, the entire play is thrown out of balance. In *The Merchant of Venice* the problem is complicated by other factors. The late E. E. Stoll, in a justly famous essay, argued that Shylock was always an unsympathetic figure to the Elizabethans because he is a miser, a usurer, and a Jew. The attitude of the civilized world has changed toward all three. We have hardly ever known a miser. The usurer seems only a man who lends money at interest. And prejudice against Jews is hateful to all fair-minded people. How then can any decent person appreciate this comedy in the spirit in which Stoll thought it was written? How valid is his view?

The strength of Stoll's interpretation lies in his strong common sense, massive erudition, and insights into dramatic method. He stressed the great importance of the common beliefs, prejudices, and superstitions that distinguish Shakespeare's time from our own era. He emphasized the significance of our vivid first impressions, of the contrasts of character with character and plot with subplot, and the necessity of approaching a play as a play and not as a book. He saw that as readers we tend to respond as individuals, but as spectators we tend to catch the contagion of the crowd and respond like everyone else. With all his gifts as an interpreter of Shakespeare, however, Stoll appears sometimes to have been strangely insensitive to the humanizing ideals of Shakespeare's age and the poetic atmosphere of his plays.

"*The Merchant of Venice* is a fairy tale," declared that wise man of the theater, Harley Granville-Barker. We may think he made too much of this point, but he reminded us forcibly that the play is set in the realm of high romance. We cannot understand it in terms of modern realism. Strange and wonderful are the stories of the caskets, the pound of flesh, and the beautiful girl disguised as a wise young judge—not to mention the miser's daughter who blossoms into a delightful and virtuous lady, filled with the joy of life. We begin to sense this poetic atmosphere in the very first scene.

ACT I

i. Antonio and Bassanio

Antonio is not in the least the stodgy, smug, intolerant businessman that he is often supposed to be. A great merchant prince of the fabulous city of Venice, he sends out his splendid ships as far as Mexico and the Indies and shares his wealth with the needy and oppressed. In his quiet way, he—like Bassanio and Portia, Lorenzo and Jessica—is a figure of romance. His friends see poetry in his commercial ventures:

Your argosies with portly sail—
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or as it were the pageants of the sea—
Do overpeer the petty traffickers
That cursy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

His friends see also a great and ever-present danger. The modern merchant is often depicted as a type enjoying comfortable security. Salerio and Solanio, like people to-day when they think of the astronauts, are fascinated and appalled by the risks that Antonio takes. Yet he faces these constant dangers with a quiet mind. Shakespeare, like the medieval poets, could find romance in the old themes of love and battle; but with a poet's insight into men and affairs, he discovered it also in the merchant-adventurer's commerce, in which, as in knightly times, danger went hand in hand with beauty and high achievement.

Antonio is admired and beloved for his good deeds. Yet the poet has wisely given him a relatively passive role. If we felt his emotions too keenly, the scene of his trial would be too painful for comedy. His "sadness" contributes to this passiveness. One guess about the cause of his melancholy is that he fears Bassanio's approaching marriage will separate him from his friend. Another is that he is just in a strange mood. Antonio, however, is too generous to regret his friend's happy marriage, and

the emphasis given to his mood suggests an important meaning.

We can find it in one of the common ideas of the Elizabethan age, the belief in presentiments. Shakespeare uses it in many plays to foreshadow future events, especially dangers and misfortunes. It is somewhat analogous to the faith in extrasensory perception, which (though not shared by the present editor) is held by some of our very intelligent contemporaries. A striking parallel to Antonio's sadness is in *Richard II*, which was probably written just before *The Merchant of Venice*. In one scene the Queen's attendants are troubled about her sadness, a much more violent melancholy than Antonio's. Suddenly, after only a few moments, she hears the shocking news of Bolingbroke's rebellion, which is to bring about the dethronement and murder of her husband. She instantly recognizes the meaning of her presentiment.

Antonio's unaccountable sadness is a less violent experience than the Queen's, apparently because the danger is more remote and because in the end he escapes it. But in kind, though not in degree, the two presentiments are alike.

Few moderns have such faith in extrasensory perception as many intelligent Elizabethans had in presentiments. Therefore, we go astray if we invent rationalistic explanations for Antonio's sadness which neither the poet nor his audience had in mind—just as we do when we explain Banquo's ghost, or King Hamlet's, as a figment of the imagination. These are cases that require the "willing suspension of disbelief."

Antonio's presentiment has an important dramatic function. It suggests to the audience some great danger of which he and his friends are totally unconscious. Thus it creates dramatic irony, quickens suspense, and awakens a warm concern for this modest and generous merchant prince, who is so much admired and beloved. In his next scene it also heightens our concern for him when he readily agrees to Shylock's apparently jovial suggestion that Antonio forfeit a pound of flesh if the three thousand ducats are not paid back on time.

Bassanio has sometimes been misunderstood even more

seriously than Antonio—as a contemptible man of fashion who puts his friend's life in danger so that he can gamble on winning an heiress. His best qualities, as Professor Bernard Grebanier has remarked, have become increasingly rare in the last century and a half. He speaks with “an elegance which is innate and unconscious. . . . The miraculous thing is that . . . this patrician quality of the mind is united . . . with a manliness, an unaggressive virility of a kind to which the twentieth century is becoming totally a stranger.” His first words about Portia,

In Belmont is a lady richly left,

do not mean that he wants to marry her for money, but that “there is good reason to promise the return of the loan” he is asking of his friend. His eloquent words about Portia herself assure us that his love for her is genuine.

As the play develops, we find Bassanio's friend, Gratiano, asking to go with him to Belmont. A loud extrovert, Gratiano “speaks an infinite deal of nothing,” and is the last person Bassanio would choose to accompany him on a delicate mission. But with a few very frank words of caution, he generously accedes to his friend's surprising request, without the slightest trace of irritation. At Belmont we see Bassanio not only as a delightful gentleman, but as a man of thought and insight as he meditates on which casket to choose. When he has won Portia, we like him for his overwhelming joy, his modesty, and his entire devotion to her.

The world of Bassanio and Antonio is not ours. Its values are chiefly those of a governing class—courage, justice, a high sense of honor, courtesy, learning, a love of beauty, compassion, and humility. Lord Bassanio has the highest rank of anyone in the play except the Duke, yet he never shows even a trace of arrogance. Like Sir Philip Sidney, the most admired and beloved young Englishman of Shakespeare's time, Bassanio has lived beyond his means because of the position he occupies. For him, as for Sidney and Castiglione, life is at once an earnest task, an adventure, and a fine art. To Sidney, Shakespeare, and their contemporaries, the marriage of so fine a noble-

man as Bassanio with a virtuous, gifted, humanely educated, and wholly delightful lady of wealth would be altogether fitting.

ii. Portia

As for Portia, even most of Shylock's warmest partisans commonly find her irresistible in her early scenes, however they may dislike her way of defeating him in the court scene. Some, of course, grumble at her deft satire of her egregious parcel of wooers, and one critic can declare solemnly, "Portia herself, for some reason, is the least lovable of Shakespeare's comedy heroines." Harley Granville-Barker, who saw nearly all the characters with remarkable clarity, observed that the poet reveals Portia's character "to us mainly in little things, and lets us feel its whole happy virtue in the melody of her speech." Granville-Barker also points out that, hedged about as she is by her father's will in the early scenes, there is very little for her to do. However this may be, the strangeness of her situation captures our attention, and the naturalness of her thoughts and feelings leads us to identify ourselves at once with her cause and to sense the irony of her situation. Although her father did not trust her to choose a husband for herself, yet, as her shrewd comments on her suitors reveal, few women ever had a keener insight into men's characters than she. Nevertheless, she does not really rebel against her father's will, and when she learns it has driven away six unwelcome suitors, she is amazed and delighted at the old man's foresight. Her filial piety meant more to the Elizabethans than to us, but her quick feelings, her sense of responsibility, her wit and keen perception of the ridiculous belong to every age and make her one of the most magnetic of heroines.

iii. Shylock and Antonio

Shylock. Three thousand ducats—well.

Bassanio. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shylock. For three months—well.

Shylock comes before us abruptly, with no previous hint that he exists. Antonio and Portia, in their first speeches, confide their thoughts and feelings to their friends. Bassanio, alone with Antonio, pours out his heart. But Shylock, from the first words he utters, is a strangely isolated figure, secretive and calculating. We begin to discover his real thoughts only when he utters them aside as Antonio enters. The hatred that he expresses so vehemently and his efforts later in the scene to appear as Antonio's cordial friend are in glaring contradiction.

Defenders of Shylock often argue that at first his offer of friendship is sincere, and that he never meant the forfeit of a pound of Antonio's flesh as anything but "a merry jest," until Jessica deserted him to elope with one of Antonio's Christian friends. This interpretation ignores the basic principle that every essential point must be clear to the simplest groundling. When a character in Shakespeare speaks aside to the audience, he always speaks his real thoughts. When Shylock says, as Antonio enters,

If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him,

we have no choice but to believe him.

E. E. Stoll's famous, though one-sided, interpretation of Shylock is indispensable for an understanding of Shylock's real character. Stoll demonstrates that the issue between the Jewish moneylender and the Christian merchant is not simply the taking of interest. It is the usurer's merciless exploitation of his victims. He is no mere "banker," as H. B. Charlton called him, but a crafty and ruthless loan shark. The Tudor laws against usury stated an ideal and then compromised with the practical facts of trade. They outlawed any interest on any loan but imposed no penalty if the rate did not exceed ten percent (nearly twice the rate commonly charged today for a mortgage loan). The typical usurer, however, found devious ways of exacting far more than the law allowed. His special victims were the inexperienced and the very needy—widows and orphans, and young gentlemen not yet possessed of their inheritance. For an original loan of a

hundred pounds, the clever usurer might gain in a few years real estate worth five hundred or a thousand pounds, bringing his wretched debtor to beggary or death. The Elizabethan hatred of usury was sanctioned by Aristotle's theory that money cannot breed money; but far more important were the enormous interest rates and fraudulent contracts of clever scoundrels. Recognizing Shylock as a usurer, the Elizabethans must have been hostile to him, especially when they saw him plotting against Antonio's life.

Why does he hate this generous merchant? Antonio has denounced Shylock in public. He has loaned money to the usurer's victims, has charged them no interest at all and thus enabled many of them to escape total ruin. Although he has never till now either charged interest on a loan, or paid it, Antonio is ready to "break a custom" rather than have his best friend risk losing Portia. For this, many critics, supposing the issue to involve one of Antonio's absolute principles, charge him with hypocrisy. But Antonio, as a man of affairs, is less interested in theory than in results. The charge would be valid only if he were exacting interest from a debtor. To rescue the usurer's victims, he has loaned them money at no interest. To enable Bassanio to win Portia, he will himself pay interest on a loan, rather than let his best friend lose his dearest hopes. In each case his concern is to bring generous aid to those in need.

While discussing the loan with Antonio, Shylock suddenly digresses and pours out one of his most eloquent and moving speeches. In the Rialto, he declares, in full view of crowds of merchants, Antonio has publicly disgraced him. He has called him dog, kicked him, and spat upon him. Some very intelligent readers have refused to believe these charges, but Antonio himself confirms them.

I am as like to call thee so again,
To spet on thee again, to spurn thee too.

It is a strange and shameful fact that for many centuries Christians held it to be proper to spit in a Jew's face on certain occasions. The idea goes back to the

Crucifixion, when the Jews mocked Christ and spat upon him. Similarly, the horrible idea that the Jews had become a race accursed by God arose from their refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah. In spite of these bitter prejudices, however, it is hard to believe that Shakespeare approved Antonio's way of publicly denouncing the usurer. The words he gives Shylock seem designed to show us how it feels to be an outcast in a Christian society.

It is hard to know the exact meaning of a gesture common four centuries ago. Just what did it mean in the social context of Elizabethan England? The great Queen herself once "spat upon a courtier's cloak that displeased her." The act of thumbing the nose was originally an obscene insult, but we have seen friends use it as a bit of light teasing.

As a compassionate man, outraged by the usurer's inhumanity to his victims, Antonio is capable of hot indignation, as we see in his answer to Shylock's charge. Today he might expose a dangerous public enemy in a newspaper article or radio address, or by presenting the facts to the prosecuting attorney. In Shakespeare's Venice, where the practice of usury seems to have been as inhuman as anywhere else, Antonio takes the kind of direct action that decent Americans sometimes took against an unscrupulous man in pioneer days on the frontier. Antonio deliberately insults the usurer, literally kicks him out of his place of business, does all he can to turn public opinion against him, and spends his own money to rescue Shylock's victims. Christ himself, though he preached the gospel of love, denounced the oppressors and hypocrites in public and whipped the money changers out of the temple. Antonio's just indignation is natural and understandable, and so is Shylock's bitter resentment. We begin to see Shylock as his own worst enemy, poisoned by greed and hate.

ACTS II AND III

From the harsh but strangely compelling figure of the anti-hero, we turn immediately to Portia. In her scenes with Morocco and Aragon, she is a marvel of self-control

and courtesy, although some of her speeches to them are edged with an irony that they never catch. Her whole future happiness is at stake, for neither Morocco nor Aragon can appreciate the best qualities of a Renaissance lady. Morocco is a warm-hearted man of honor and courage, who has the grace to think he may not deserve her. But there is something naïve, almost barbaric, in his desire that his fate be decided by having his rivals and himself cut their flesh to see whose blood is reddest. His mind is very simple; hers is highly endowed by nature and has acquired the best culture of a remarkable age and country. We wish Morocco well, but he is no mate for Portia. As for Aragon, he has the presumptuous pride that the Elizabethans disliked in the Spaniards. He has also the naïveté to suppose that a man could actually deserve such a woman as Portia, and that he is that man. Most of Shakespeare's genuine lovers are, like Portia and Bassanio, humbled by their love.

One key to the meaning of a Shakespeare play is the way he directs our sympathies. In many of his masterpieces there is one person, or more, through whose eyes we are particularly invited to see the other characters and the events. In *Henry the Fourth* it is chiefly Prince Hal, in *Hamlet* it is Horatio and Hamlet, in *Twelfth Night* it is Viola. Who is it in *The Merchant of Venice*?

In the opening scene, in which Antonio is the center of attention but at first does little, we see him as four of his friends do. In Shylock's first scene, many modern readers see him as he sees himself, but those who realize what a usurer actually was will look at him as Bassanio and Antonio do. Stoll, in a long analysis, argued that whenever we begin to sympathize with Shylock, his greed and hatred are emphasized. He accuses Antonio of disgracing him and then plots to kill him. He speaks of Launcelot as a kind patch, but adds that he is "a huge feeder." He speaks kindly to his daughter as "Jessica, my girl," and instantly remembers his dream of moneybags. In one of his greatest scenes, he pours out a passionate defense of the Jewish people and a challenge to Christians to practice the mercy and humility that they profess; but he ends the speech on the note of revenge, arranging with Tubal to meet him at the synagogue

to plan the legalized murder of a generous Christian merchant.

Stoll makes an important point. But we can turn it around and show, on his own evidence, that in each of Shylock's scenes, except the briefest, he wins the sympathy of the audience for at least a few moments. When do we ever see the least touch of kindly feeling in Iago or Goneril? Shylock differs, too, from other Shakespearean villains—from Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, with whom he is often compared, and from Hamlet's uncle, King Claudius—in that these men are entirely conscious of their villainy. At the trial, Shylock can ask, apparently in all sincerity, "What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?" The unique thing about Shylock is this strange sincerity. He can nurse the most diabolical passions and imagine he does no wrong.

Doubtless the Elizabethans laughed with Solanio and Salerio when they baited Shylock, for as Stoll has emphasized, a general audience in the theater will respond to the mood of the characters on stage. Yet we must never suppose that these two friends of Antonio express more than a very small part of Shakespeare's attitude toward the Jew. These characters can scarcely be distinguished from one another, and we do not go to such people to find Shakespeare's whole meaning. Their function is chiefly to release the feelings of the audience or to tell us news. In the court scene, the jeers and imprecations of Gratiano provide a similar release. But "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice." The shallow comments of this excited extrovert contrast with the wisdom of Portia and the considered judgment of Antonio.

Throughout the play, Shakespeare has invited us to look at the other characters and the action through Portia's eyes, and to share her sympathies. One way he does this is in the skillful arrangement of contrasting scenes. He places Shylock's first scene between Portia's first and second, and her third just after Jessica's flight. Beginning with Portia's fourth scene (II.ix), he alternates her scenes with Shylock's with almost exact regularity until their encounter in the courtroom. In this way the poet silently draws ever more sharply the contrast between the usurer and the wise Renais-

sance lady, before either has any idea of the other's existence.

Our sympathies are never so strongly with Portia, or with Bassanio, as in the beautiful scene where he wins her, particularly in the tense moments while she watches him meditating on which casket to choose, and in the climax that brings them a happiness they can hardly express. When the sudden news comes of Antonio's catastrophic losses, Portia instantly offers her entire fortune to save her husband's friend of whom until now she has never heard. Like Bassanio and Antonio, she knows how to "give and hazard all she hath." In this scene of love and generous friendship, we see Portia at her best.

In the next scene we find Shylock at his worst, raging madly at Antonio and promising to take his life. It is his one scene in the play in which we can have no spark of sympathy for him. Is destiny on his side, or on Portia's?

SHYLOCK AND JUDAISM

As we approach the court scene, we must face the question of Shakespeare's attitude toward the Jews. Stoll and some others believed he shared the hateful prejudice that had disgraced Christianity for over fifteen centuries. In 1935, Professor John W. Draper sharply challenged this view. "Shylock the Jew was merely exotic local color," he declared. "Shylock the usurer was a commentary on London life." The second statement is certainly true; there were many usurers in the great city, and their cruelty was notorious. The first statement is partly true. Dr. J. L. Cardozo seems to have proved that—contrary to common opinion—there were no Jews, or almost none, dwelling anywhere in Shakespeare's London, unless we except the small band of a few hundred Portuguese who had converted from Judaism to Christianity. Shylock must have been an exotic figure to the Elizabethans.

His Judaism, however, is emphasized again and again. In Shylock the great virtues of the ancient Hebrews have often been corrupted into the nearest vices. Reverence for

law has degenerated into legalism, loyalty to his own people into a vehement antipathy to Christians, practical sagacity into the love of money, a noble love of justice into a fanatical thirst for a revenge that excludes every thought of mercy. Yet until the climax of the court scene, Shylock is blindly unconscious of doing anything wrong. Here is no mere comic butt, no mere hypocrite and villain, but a warped and dangerous fanatic—sometimes comic, sometimes hateful—impervious to any normal appeal to common sense or natural kindness, but always strangely human. Something has poisoned this man, and apparently a whole people, originally splendidly endowed by nature.

Most modern readers find the source of the poison in Christian persecution. Shakespeare touches on this idea, especially in Shylock's great defense of the humanity of the Jews. But his emphasis lies elsewhere. Shylock is fiercely conscious of his "sacred nation." He defends the iniquitous practice of usury by citing the Old Testament. As Christians had always said of the Jews from the days of St. Paul, he insists on the bare letter of the law and ignores the spirit. He goes to the synagogue to plan Antonio's death. In the court scene he declares solemnly he has "an oath in heaven" that he will cut the pound of flesh from Antonio. Earlier we see momentarily a better side of his Judaism, in his memory of his wife's first gift. It is obvious, nevertheless, that Shakespeare has many times connected Shylock's worst qualities with the Hebrew religion.

So hateful is this idea to us that we must be very certain just what it meant to Shakespeare. The prejudice is not at all the Nazi's hatred of the Jew's blood and supposed race, for Jessica is "a daughter to his blood" but not to "his manners," i.e., his moral values and actions. The hostility is directed against Shylock's code of ethics and the religion that is assumed to be its source.

How could the humane and clear-sighted Shakespeare ever have taken such a view of one of the world's great religions? Perhaps we can most easily understand his view if we remember the attitude toward Puritans that is held today by some humane but not well-informed people. Without examining the facts with an open mind, they see the Puritans as narrow zealots or even hypocrites, who—like

Shylock—despised beauty and merrymaking, loved money, and looked down with contempt on their less sanctified neighbors. Although these people think of themselves as enlightened and tolerant, they regard the Puritan religion as a fanaticism—a perverted view of life which warped a man's mind, chilled his sympathies, and poisoned his relations with all who did not share the special outlook of the chosen few. There is some truth in this picture, but impartial historians know it to be, on the whole, distorted and unjust.

The analogy with Judaism is very close, for the Puritans' emphasis on the Old Testament made them the most Hebraic of Christian groups. In Elizabeth's reign, even men of large minds and generous sympathies could regard the Jewish faith very much as many of our contemporaries regard Puritanism. For centuries Christians had been taught almost universally that the ancient religion of Israel had degenerated into a narrow fanaticism, teaching a pedantic adherence to the mere letter of the law and ignoring the spirit. "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life," wrote St. Paul. As a Christian scholar of our time, James Parkes, wrote: "The inadequacy of the law . . . was [the Church Fathers'] continual accusation against the Jews." Parkes also observed that our English word "law" is no adequate equivalent for the original word "*Torah*" in the Hebrew text:

The written law was . . . the basis of *Torah*, but *Torah* itself was the complete revelation of the holy community or nation through which the individual in every act could fulfill the purpose of God in his creation.

Between this lofty Hebrew concept and the Christian idea of the divine mercy which at once fulfills and transcends the law, there is no irreconcilable conflict. Shakespeare and the members of his audience, however, could not know what scholars so wise as Richard Hooker (1554?–1600) had not discovered.

The modern parallel to Shylock is not the Jews. It is the Nazi persecutors of the Jews.

THE TRIAL

The scene of Antonio's trial surpasses almost anything Shakespeare had ever written previously in both range and power. The sustained clash of wills, the battle of ideas, the variety of characterization, the prolonged suspense (relieved now and then by touches of comedy), the deepening irony, and the stunning reversal of fortune when Portia finally turns Shylock's own weapon against himself—all these reveal the hand of a great craftsman and the inspiration of a master poet.

Often in the nineteenth century, and sometimes in the twentieth, this scene has been interpreted as "The Tragedy of Shylock." Stoll interpreted it as harsh comedy. After the reversal of fortune, he says, "The Jew's very words are echoed by Portia and Gratiano as they jeer, and at every turn that justice takes . . . there are now peals and shouts of laughter." Neither interpretation does justice to Shakespeare's sane and compassionate view.

In the first place, though everyone else is appalled at Shylock's cruelty, he himself is here a figure of real dignity. The mad fierceness of his last two scenes is gone. As he addresses the Duke, his language is eloquent, and his strange reasoning is cogent. Confident in the justice of his cause, he regards Gratiano's bitter curse with amused indifference. To the Duke and Portia he shows a courteous respect. Up to the sudden reversal of his fortunes, he treats her with admiration and genuine friendliness. In one sense, we see him at his best in this scene. With some exceptions, his bearing in more than half the scene is that of a civilized man of affairs. The contrast between his manner and his fanatical purpose heightens the effect. He is a shrewd and persuasive advocate in his astounding case. When the Duke makes a powerful appeal that he show "human gentleness and love," Shylock defends with powerful logic his right to take Antonio's life.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?
Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?

The tension of the scene mounts steadily, but Shakespeare skillfully breaks it now and then. Just before Belario's messenger (Nerissa) comes in, we are deeply moved by the selfless friendship of Bassanio and Antonio, as each insists that he should die for the other. Then the sight of Nerissa trying, without quite perfect success, to act the part of an experienced law clerk brings a hint of comedy. As spectators we need not laugh, but all will feel a slight lessening of tension. When Shylock takes the occasion to whet his knife on his sole, the grotesque act brings us still nearer to comedy.

Portia enters dressed as a judge and gets quickly down to business. Shylock's procedure cannot be attacked under the law.

Then must the Jew be merciful.
On what compulsion must I?

The question reveals how tightly his moral code is bound to the letter of the law. What it forbids he will never do. But he can neither give nor forgive. Portia, in a speech that almost sums up the meaning of the play, explains that mercy must be an entirely free gift. It blesses the giver and the receiver alike. To show mercy is the privilege of kings, of God himself. But if Shylock insists on the letter of the law, sentence must be given against the merchant. Then comes Portia's quiet masterstroke.

Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood.

Stunned as he is, Shylock tries to accept the previous offer of thrice the bond. But having refused it, he now has no claim on it or even on the bare principal. The law has yet another hold on him. He, an alien, has plotted against a citizen's life. All his vast wealth is forfeit, half to Antonio, half to the state, and his life lies "in the mercy of the Duke only."

Portia has appealed in vain to reason, to charity, and to self-interest. Now she has turned the letter of the law against Shylock. He has been guilty of the mad presumption that

the Greeks called *hubris*. For him this sudden blow is a profound psychological shock. No longer can he boast he does no wrong. By *his own code*, the letter of the law, he knows he is guilty of a deadly crime. Stunned and broken, he kneels before the Duke.

The strict court of Venice understands mercy as well as justice. Justice demands that the offender be punished, be forced to make amends to the injured party, and be restrained from doing further harm. Mercy draws a distinction between a crime willed and a crime enacted. As the prince of Christian humanists, Erasmus, says of charity, mercy requires that the Christian "be an enemy only to vice. Let him kill the Turk, but save the man." Let Portia and the Duke kill his fanaticism, but save the man.

Can we honestly say that he receives mercy? By the mere letter of the law he receives it abundantly. He now owns not a penny's worth of property, and his life is forfeit. The Duke instantly pardons him his life, but Shylock is ready to die. It is now Antonio's opportunity to show mercy. Under the law, one half of Shylock's wealth is now Antonio's, the other half the state's. Following a hint of the Duke's, the merchant proposes, first, that the half which is the state's be restored conditionally to Shylock. Second, he offers to use his own half as a permanent loan without interest, and at the Jew's death to give it outright to Jessica and Lorenzo. He imposes two conditions: first, that the young couple shall receive all Shylock's property at his death; second, that he immediately become a Christian.

In view of Shylock's own cruelty to his luckless debtors, these terms would seem to us both just and merciful, were it not for the forced conversion. This we are bound to resent if we think of the Hebrew faith only as it really is. But if we see it as it had been misunderstood by Christians for over fifteen centuries, we can describe it in the words of Edmund Burke (written with no reference to Judaism) as "an uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition." As we painfully rediscovered in Hitler's Germany, the perversion of the instincts of religion and human loyalty can be one of the most dangerous forces in the world. The fanatical Nazis had to be reeducated before they could ever be trusted; so Shylock, too, must give up his fanatical adher-

ence to the letter of the law. It is noteworthy that Antonio, the Duke, and Portia never show any hatred of Shylock. In their view he is being saved from himself. Shakespeare's information about a great religious faith was defective and largely mistaken, but his own values are universal.

FULFILLMENT

The final scene at Portia's estate will seem irrelevant and bitterly ironical to those who still regard Shylock as a victim of Christian bigotry. To others it will be something very different. A good man has been saved from death. A dangerous but greatly gifted man has begun to see life in an altogether new way. Now, in the peace and the magical beauty of the evening, Lorenzo and Jessica are recalling famous lovers of the past. Their earnest mood, broken by playful teasing, Lorenzo's poetic nature as revealed in his words about the music of the spheres, the entrance of Portia and Nerissa, happy in a work of redemption fully achieved—all this suggests powerfully the happy harmony of life at its best. Gratiano's sudden quarrel with Nerissa and the women's harmless teasing of the men about the rings they gave away bring us back to ordinary life and to the mood of comedy. Portia's news that three of Antonio's argosies

Are richly come to harbor suddenly,

and her good news also for Jessica and Lorenzo give promise of long happiness for them. Gratiano's final speech brings a laugh from the audience.

To those who can see Shylock as neither an entire villain nor a hero, but a gifted man whose fanatical hatred makes him his own worst enemy until he is saved from himself, *The Merchant of Venice* is no tragedy. To those who can view the play from the point of view of the wise, realistic, and compassionate heroine, it is one of Shakespeare's most beautiful and most significant comedies.

KENNETH MYRICK
Tufts University

The Merchant of Venice

[Dramatis Personae]

The Duke of Venice
The Prince of Morocco } suitors to Portia
The Prince of Aragon }
Antonio, a merchant of Venice
Bassanio, his friend, suitor to Portia
Gratiano }
Salerio } friends to Antonio and Bassanio
Solanio }
Lorenzo, in love with Jessica
Shylock, a Jew
Tubal, a Jew, his friend
Launcelot Gobbo, a clown, servant to Shylock
Old Gobbo, father to Launcelot
Leonardo, servant to Bassanio
Balthasar } servants to Portia
Stephano }
Portia, an heiress
Nerissa, her waiting woman
Jessica, daughter to Shylock
Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the court of justice,
Jailer, Servants, and other Attendants

Scene: Venice and Belmont]

The Merchant of Venice

[ACT I

Scene I. Venice. A street.]

Enter Antonio, Salerio, and Solanio.

Antonio. In sooth I know not why I am so sad.⁰¹
It wearies me, you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;⁰
And such a want-wit⁰ sadness⁰ makes of me
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salerio. Your mind is tossing on the ocean,⁰
There where your argosies⁰ with portly⁰ sail—
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or as it were the pageants⁰ of the sea—
Do overpeer the petty traffickers
That cursy⁰ to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Solanio. Believe me, sir, had I such venture⁰ forth,
The better part of my affections would

1 The degree sign (°) indicates a footnote, which is keyed to the text by line number. Text references are printed in boldface type; the annotation follows in roman type.

1.1.1. sad sober, depressed 5 am to learn need to learn, cannot guess (the incomplete line indicates a short pause) 6 want-wit dull fellow 6 sadness depression 8 ocean (pronounced "6-ce-an") 9 argosies great merchant ships 9 portly stately 11 pageants floats, splendidly decorated wagons in the shape of castles, dragons, etc. 13 cursy curtsy, bow 15 venture unpredictable enterprise

Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still^o
 Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind,
 Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;^o
 20 And every object that might make me fear
 Mis ortune to my ventures, out of doubt
 Would make me sad.

Salerio. My wind cooling my broth
 Would blow me to an ague^o when I thought
 What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
 25 I should not see the sandy hourglass run
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,
 And see my wealthy *Andrew*^o docked in sand,
 Vailing^o her high top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
 30 And see the holy edifice of stone
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
 Which touching but my gentle^o vessel's side
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks—
 35 And in a word, but even now worth this,^o
 And now worth nothing?^o Shall I have the thought
 To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
 That such a thing bechanced^o would make me sad?
 But tell not me! I know Antonio
 40 Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Antonio. Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,
 My ventures are not in one bottom^o trusted,
 Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
 Upon the fortune of this present year.
 45 Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Solanio. Why then you are in love.

Antonio. Fie, fie!

Solanio. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad

17 still always 19 roads harbors 23 ague trembling fit 27 *Andrew* the name of a ship 28 *Vailing* lowering, in recognition of a superior 32 gentle noble and gentle; hence, splendid and frail 35, 36 this, nothing (spoken with an emphatic gesture) 38 bechanced should it happen 42 bottom ship

Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now by two-headed Janus,^o 50
Nature hath framed strange^o fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile 55
Though Nestor^o swear the jest be laughable.

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well;
We leave you now with better company.

Salerio. I would have stayed till I had made you merry, 60
If worthier friends had not prevented^o me.

Antonio. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it your own business calls on you,
And you embrace th' occasion to depart.

Salerio. Good morrow, my good lords. 65

Bassanio. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? Say,
when?

You grow exceeding strange;^o must it be so?

Salerio. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

Exeunt Salerio and Solanio.

Lorenzo. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found
Antonio,

We two will leave you; but at dinner time 70
I pray you have in mind where we must meet.

Bassanio. I will not fail you.

Gratiano. You look not well, Signior Antonio.

50 two-headed Janus Roman god of entrances and hence of all beginnings; depicted with two faces, one cheerful, one sad, symbolizing the uncertainty of the future (Solanio suggests that Antonio is as strange a figure as Janus) 51 strange marvelously queer 56 Nestor the oldest and most venerable Greek leader in the Trojan War; a type of gravity and wisdom 61 prevented forestalled 67 strange distant

You have too much respect upon^o the world;
 They lose it that do buy it with much care.
 Believe me, you are marvelously changed.

Antonio. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano—
 A stage, where every man must play a part,
 And mine a sad one.

Gratiano. Let me play the fool!

80 With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
 And let my liver^o rather heat with wine
 Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.^o
 Why should a man whose blood is warm within
 Sit like his grandsire, cut in alabaster?
 85 Sleep when he wakes? And creep into the jaundice^o
 By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
 I love thee, and 'tis my love that speaks—
 There are a sort of men whose visages
 Do cream and mantle^o like a standing pond,
 90 And do a willful stillness entertain^o
 With purpose to be dressed in an opinion^o
 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,^o
 As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,^o
 And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!"
 95 O my Antonio, I do know of these
 That therefore only are reputed wise
 For saying nothing; when I am very sure
 If they should speak, would almost dam^o those ears,
 Which hearing them would call their brothers fools.
 100 I'll tell thee more of this another time.

74 *respect upon* regard for 81 *liver* one of the supposed seats of the passions 82 *mortifying groans* groans supposed to deaden vitality (by drawing blood from the heart) 85 *jaundice* disease thought to be caused by peevishness 89 *cream and mantle* become impassive like thick cream on a bowl of milk, or a mantle of scum on a pond 90 *entertain* assume 91 *opinion* reputation (as in line 102) 92 *profound conceit* power of forming profound conceptions 93 *I am Sir Oracle* i.e., I am as wise as a Greek oracle (inspired by the gods) 98 *dam* (often emended to "damn," and probably a pun: If these silent and reputedly wise men ever did speak, the abundance of their foolish words would not only dam up the ears of the listeners, but also make the listeners call the formerly silent men fools, and thus bring on the listeners the penalty of damnation which is pronounced on all who apply this term to a brother-man. See Matthew 5:22)

But fish not with this melancholy bait
 For this fool gudgeon,^o this opinion.
 Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile;
 I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lorenzo. Well, we will leave you then till dinner time. 103
 I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
 For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gratiano. Well, keep me company but two years moe,^o
 Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Antonio. Fare you well; I'll grow a talker for this gear.^o 110

Gratiano. Thanks i' faith; for silence is only commend-
 able

In a neat's tongue^o dried and a maid not vendible.^o

Exeunt [Gratiano and Lorenzo].

Antonio. Is that anything now?

Bassanio. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing,
 more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as 113
 two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you
 shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you
 have them they are not worth the search.

Antonio. Well, tell me now, what lady is the same
 To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage 120
 That you today promised to tell me of?

Bassanio. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
 How much I have disabled mine estate,
 By something^o showing a more swelling port^o
 Than my faint means would grant continuance.^o 123
 Nor do I now make moan to be abridged^o

101-02 But . . . gudgeon don't cultivate melancholy to gain a reputation for silent wisdom, for the judgment of the multitude is stupid ("gudgeon" = proverbially foolish fish) 108 moe more ("moe" is the old positive form of which "more" was the comparative) 110 gear stuff (a mild jest, showing that Gratiano has cheered Antonio for a moment) 112 neat's tongue beef tongue 112 vendible salable, i.e., marriageable 124 something somewhat 124 swelling port impressive style of living 125 grant continuance allow me to continue 126 abridged cut down

From such a noble rate;° but my chief care
 Is to come fairly off from the great debts
 Wherein my time, something too prodigal,°
 130 Hath left me gaged.° To you, Antonio,
 I owe the most in money and in love,
 And from your love I have a warranty
 To unburden all my plots and purposes
 How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

135 *Antonio.* I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,
 And if it stand as you yourself still° do,
 Within the eye of honor, be assured
 My purse, my person, my extremest means
 Lie all unlocked to your occasions.°

140 *Bassanio.* In my schooldays, when I had lost one shaft°
 I shot his fellow° of the selfsame flight°
 The selfsame way, with more advised° watch,
 To find the other forth; and by adventuring both
 I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof°
 145 Because what follows is pure innocence.°
 I owe you much, and like a willful youth°
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please
 To shoot another arrow that self way
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
 150 As I will watch the aim, or° to find both,
 Or bring your latter hazard° back again
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Antonio. You know me well, and herein spend but time
 To wind about my love with circumstance;°
 155 And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
 In making question of my uttermost

127 rate scale 129 my time, something too prodigal the lavish way
 I spent my time 130 gaged pledged 136 still always 139 occasions
 needs 140 shaft arrow 141 fellow duplicate 141 selfsame
 flight identical in size and in the feathers 142 advised considered
 144 proof experience 145 pure innocence childlike sincerity 146
 like a willful youth i.e., like one who neglected sound advice and
 learned by making mistakes 150 or either 151 hazard thing risked
 154 To wind . . . circumstance to approach my love circuitously with
 elaborate talk

Than if you had made waste of all I have.
 Then do but say to me what I should do
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,
 And I am prest unto it.° Therefore speak.

160

Bassanio. In Belmont is a lady richly left;°
 And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
 Of wondrous virtues.° Sometimes from her eyes
 I did receive fair speechless messages.
 Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
 To° Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia;°
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
 For the four winds blow in from every coast
 Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
 Which makes her seat° of Belmont Colchos' strond,°
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.
 O my Antonio, had I but the means
 To hold a rival place with one of them,
 I have a mind presages me° such thrift°
 That I should questionless be fortunate!

165

170

175

Antonio. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
 Neither have I money, nor commodity°
 To raise a present sum. Therefore go forth;
 Try what my credit can in Venice do.
 That shall be racked° even to the uttermost
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
 Go presently° inquire, and so will I,
 Where money is; and I no question make
 To have it of my trust or for my sake.°

180

Exeunt. 185

160 prest unto it ready to aid you in it (from Latin *praesto*, at hand, ready) 161 richly left left rich 163 virtues powers and gifts (a more inclusive word than today) 165-66 nothing undervalued/To of no less value than 166 Brutus' Portia famed for her intellectual gifts, her resolution, and her wifely devotion (see *Julius Caesar*, II.i. 233-308) 171 seat estate 171 Colchos' strond the shore east of the Black Sea where Jason won the Golden Fleece 175 a mind presages me a presentiment that foretells me 175 thrift thriving, success 178 commodity merchandise 181 racked stretched to the point of torture (as on the rack) 183 presently instantly 185 of my trust or for my sake on my credit or on the basis of friendship

[Scene II. Belmont. Portia's house.]

Enter Portia with her waiting woman, Nerissa.

Portia. By my troth,° Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

Nerissa. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit° with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean° happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean;° superfluity comes sooner by° white hairs, but competency° lives longer.

Portia. Good sentences,° and well pronounced.

Nerissa. They would be better if well followed.

Portia. If to do were as easy to know what were good to do, chapels had been° churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood,° but a hot temper° leaps o'er a cold decree;° such a hare is madness the youth to skip o'er the meshes° of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion° to choose me a husband. O me, the word "choose"! I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will° of

I ii.1 troth faith 5-6 surfeit are overfed, glutted 7, 8 mean (1) slight (2) golden mean 8 comes sooner by acquires sooner 9 competency a modest but comfortable fortune 10 sentences sententious maxims 13 had been would have been 18 blood passion 18 hot temper ardent temperament 19 cold decree decision made in cold judgment 20 meshes nets for catching small creatures 21 in the fashion of the sort 24 will . . . will wish . . . last will and testament

a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot
choose one, nor refuse none?° 25

Nerissa. Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men
at their death have good inspirations. Therefore the
lott'ry that he hath devised in these three chests of
gold, silver, and lead, whereof who chooses his mean- 30
ing chooses you, will no doubt never be chosen by
any rightly but one who you shall rightly love. But
what warmth is there in your affection towards any of
these princely suitors that are already come?

Portia. I pray thee overname them; and as thou namest 35
them I will describe them, and according to my de-
scription level at my affection.

Nerissa. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Portia. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but
talk of his horse, and he makes it a great appropri- 40
ation to his own good parts° that he can shoe him
himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother
played false with a smith.

Nerissa. Then is there the County° Palatine.

Portia. He doth nothing but frown—as who should say, 45
“And° you will not have me, choose!” He hears
merry tales and smiles not; I fear he will prove the
weeping philosopher° when he grows old, being so
full of unmannerly sadness° in his youth. I had
rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in 50
his mouth than to either of these. God defend me
from these two!

Nerissa. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le
Bon?

Portia. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a 55
man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but

26 refuse none refuse any 40-41 appropriation . . . parts personal
accomplishment added to his talents 44 County Count 46 And if
47-48 the weeping philosopher i.e., another Heraclitus 49 unman-
nerly sadness unbecoming seriousness

he! Why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man. If a throstle° sing, he falls straight a-cap'ring; he will fence with his own shadow. If I should° marry him, I should° marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him; for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

65 *Nerissa.* What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Portia. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him. He hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper° man's picture, but alas, who can converse with a dumbshow? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet° in Italy, his round hose° in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behavior everywhere.

Nerissa. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbor?

Portia. That he hath a neighborly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able. I think the Frenchman° became his surety and sealed under for another.

Nerissa. How like you the young German,° the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

85 *Portia.* Very vilely in the morning when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk. When he is best he is a little worse than a man, and when he

59 throstle song thrush 61 should . . . should were to . . . would be obliged to 71 proper handsome 73 doublet upper garment, corresponding to the modern coat 73-74 round hose lower garment, combining the functions of breeches and stockings 76-81 Scottish lord . . . Frenchman (an allusion to the French promises of aid to the Scots against the English, promises that were often broken) 83 German (Germans were proverbially heavy drinkers)

is worst he is little better than a beast.^o And the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift^o to go without him.

90

Nerissa. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will if you should refuse to accept him.

Portia. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

95

Nerissa. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations; which is indeed to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort^o than your father's imposition,^o depending on the caskets.

100

Portia. If I live to be as old as Sibylla,^o I will die as chaste as Diana unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

105

110

Nerissa. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Portia. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio!—as I think, so was he called.

115

Nerissa. True, madam. He, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

87-88 best . . . beast (a pun, "beast" being pronounced almost like "best." Such quibbles were not necessarily comic, but were considered clever and interesting) 89 make shift find a way 103 sort manner 103-04 imposition command 105 Sibylla the Cumean Sibyl (Apollo promised her as many years of life as were the grains of sand she was holding in her hand)

Portia. I remember him well, and I remember him
120 worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Servingman.

How now? What news?

Servingman. The four strangers° seek for you, madam,
to take their leave; and there is a forerunner come
125 from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word
the Prince his master will be here tonight.

Portia. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good
heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should
be glad of his approach. If he have the condition of a
saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he
130 should shrive me than wive me. Come, Nerissa. Sir-
rah,° go before. Whiles we shut the gate upon one
wooer, another knocks at the door. *Exeunt.*

[Scene III. Venice. A public place.]

Enter Bassanio with Shylock the Jew.

Shylock. Three thousand ducats—well.

Bassanio. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shylock. For three months—well.

Bassanio. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be
s bound.°

Shylock. Antonio shall become bound—well.

122 four strangers (apparently Shakespeare originally described four
suitors, then added two more, and forgot to change "four" to "six")
130-31 Sirrah (a regular form of address to a social inferior. Portia
speaks to the servant) I.iii.5 bound under legal obligation as co-
signer of the bond

Bassanio. May° you stead° me? Will you pleasure me?
Shall I know your answer?

Shylock. Three thousand ducats for three months, and
Antonio bound.

Bassanio. Your answer to that.

Shylock. Antonio is a good man.°

Bassanio. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shylock. Ho no, no, no, no! My meaning in saying he is
a good man, is to have you understand me that he is
sufficient.° Yet his means are in supposition:° he hath
an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I
understand, moreover, upon the Rialto,° he hath a
third at Mexico, a fourth for England—and other
ventures he hath, squand'ed abroad. But ships are
but boards, sailors but men; there be land rats and
water rats, water thieves and land thieves—I mean
pirates°—and then there is the peril of waters, winds,
and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient.
Three thousand ducats—I think I may take his bond.

Bassanio. Be assured you may.

Shylock. I will be assured I may. And that I may be assured,
I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bassanio. If it please you to dine with us.

Shylock. Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation
which your prophet the Nazarite° conjured the devil
into! I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you,
walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat
with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What
news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

7 May can 7 stead be of service to 12 good man good business
risk (Bassanio takes the word as referring to moral character) 17
sufficient adequate, responsible 17 in supposition doubtful 19
Rialto famous bridge in Venice, the center of commercial activity
24 pirates (pronounced "pi-rats," with quibble on "rats") 32 the
Nazarite Christ (the allusion is to the episode in Mark 5:1-13, Luke
8:26-33)

Enter Antonio.

Bassanio. This is Signior Antonio.

Shylock. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican^o he looks.

I hate him for^o he is a Christian;

40 But more, for that in low simplicity

He lends out money gratis, and brings down

The rate of usance^o here with us in Venice.

If I can catch him once upon the hip,^o

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

43 He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,

Even there where merchants most do congregate,

On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,^o

Which he calls interest. Cursèd be my tribe

If I forgive him.

Bassanio. Shylock, do you hear?

50 *Shylock.* I am debating of my present store,^o

And by the near guess of my memory

I cannot instantly raise up the gross^o

Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?

Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,

55 Will furnish me. But soft,^o how many months

Do you desire? [*To Antonio*] Rest you fair, good signior!

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Antonio. Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow

By taking nor by giving of excess,

60 Yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend,

I'll break a custom. [*To Bassanio*] Is he yet possessed^o

How much ye would?^o

38 *publican* (sometimes glossed as a Roman tax-gatherer, as in Matthew 11:17 and 31:30 f., and sometimes as an Elizabethan innkeeper. Perhaps Shylock uses it as an inexact but bitter term of reproach)
39 for because 42 *usance* interest 43 *upon the hip* at a disadvantage (a term in wrestling) 47 *thrift* prosperity 50 *present store* stock of ready money 52 *gross* whole amount 55 *soft* hold, stay
61 *possessed* apprised 62 *would* desire

Shylock.

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Antonio. And for three months.

Shylock. I had forgot—three months, you told me so.

Well then, your bond. And let me see—but hear you: 63

Methoughts° you said you neither lend nor borrow

Upon advantage.°

Antonio.

I do never use it.

Shylock. When Jacob° grazed his uncle Laban's
sheep—

This Jacob from our holy Abram was,

As his wise mother wrought in his behalf, 70

The third possessor; ay, he was the third—

Antonio. And what of him? Did he take interest?

Shylock. No, not take interest—not as you would say

Directly int'rest. Mark what Jacob did:

When Laban and himself were compromised° 75

That all the eanlings which were streaked and pied

Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes being rank

In end of autumn turned to the rams;

And when the work of generation was

Between these woolly breeders in the act, 80

The skillful shepherd pilled° me° certain wands,

And in the doing of the deed of kind°

He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,

Who then conceiving, did in eaning° time

Fall parti-colored lambs, and those were Jacob's. 85

This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;

And thrift is blessing if men steal it not.

Antonio. This was a venture,° sir, that Jacob served for,

A thing not in his power to bring to pass,

But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven. 90

Was this inserted to make interest good?

Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

66 Methoughts it seemed to me 67 advantage interest 68 Jacob
(see Genesis 30:25-43; 31:1-13) 75 were compromised had reached
an agreement 81 pilled stripped 81 me (the ethical dative) 82
kind nature 84 eaning lambing 88 venture unpredictable enter-
prise

Shylock. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.
But note me, signior—

Antonio. Mark you this, Bassanio,

95 The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly^o apple rotten at the heart.
O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

Shylock. Three thousand ducats—'tis a good round
100 sum.

Three months from twelve—then let me see, the
rate—

Antonio. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding^o to you?

Shylock. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft

In the Rialto you have rated^o me
105 About my moneys and my usances.
Still^o have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For suff^orance^o is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog,
And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine,^o
110 And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help.
Go to, then.^o You come to me and you say,
“Shylock, we would have moneys”—you say so,
You that did void your rheum^o upon my beard
115 And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold! Moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
“Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?” Or
120 Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath, and whisp'ring humbleness,
Say this:

98 goodly fine-appearing 102 beholding beholden, obligated 104
rated berated, reviled 106 Still always 107 suff^orance long-suffer-
ing 109 gaberdine the distinctive gown or mantle of the Jews 112
Go to, then (an exclamation suggesting annoyance) 114 rheum
spittle

"Fair sir, you spet on me on Wednesday last,
 You spurned me such a day, another time
 You called me dog; and for these courtesies
 I'll lend you thus much moneys"?

123

Antonio. I am as like to call thee so again,
 To spet on thee again, to spurn thee too.
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
 As to thy friends—for when did friendship take
 A breed for barren metal^o of his friend?—
 But lend it rather to thine enemy,
 Who if he break,^o thou mayst with better face
 Exact the penalty.

130

Shylock. Why look you, how you storm!
 I would be friends with you, and have your love,
 Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
 Supply your present wants, and take no doit^o
 Of usance for my moneys; and you'll not hear me.
 This is kind^o I offer.

133

Bassanio. This were kindness.

Shylock. This kindness will I show: 140
 Go with me to a notary; seal me there
 Your single^o bond, and, in a merry sport,
 If you repay me not on such a day,
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are
 Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit
 Be nominated for an equal pound
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

143

Antonio. Content, in faith. I'll seal to such a bond,
 And say there is much kindness^o in the Jew.

150

Bassanio. You shall not seal to such a bond for me!
 I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

131 breed for barren metal interest (Aristotelian doctrine held that money, unlike living things, cannot reproduce) 133 break become insolvent 137 doit tiny Dutch coin, valued at one-eighth of an English penny 139 kind kind and natural (in contrast to usurious dealings) 142 single without further security 150 kindness natural friendliness

Antonio. Why fear not, man; I will not forfeit it.
 Within these two months—that's a month before
 155 This bond expires—I do expect return
 Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shylock. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
 Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
 The thoughts of others! Pray you tell me this:
 160 If he should break his day,^o what should I gain
 By the exaction of the forfeiture?
 A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
 Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
 As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say
 165 To buy his favor I extend this friendship.
 If he will take it, so; if not, adieu.^o
 And for my love I pray you wrong me not.^o

Antonio. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shylock. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
 170 Give him direction for this merry bond,
 And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
 See to my house, left in the fearful^o guard
 Of an unthrifty knave,^o and presently^o
 I'll be with you.

Exit.

Antonio. Hie thee, gentle Jew.^o
 175 The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

Bassanio. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

Antonio. Come on. In this there can be no dismay;
 My ships come home a month before the day.

Exeunt.

160 break his day break his promise to pay on the due date 166
 adieu (probably the word has the original meaning, "I commend
 you to God") 167 And . . . wrong me not i.e., and for the friend-
 ship I have shown you, please don't misjudge me in the future
 172 fearful hazardous 173 unthrifty knave careless youngster 173
 presently instantly 174 gentle Jew courteous Jew (with a pun on
 "gentile")

[ACT II

Scene I. Belmont. Portia's house.]

[*Flourish of cornets.*] Enter [*the Prince of Morocco, a tawny Moor all in white, and three or four Followers accordingly, with Portia, Nerissa, and their Train.*]

Morocco. Mislike me not for my complexion,
 The shadowed° livery° of the burnished sun,
 To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.
 Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
 Where Phoebus'° fire scarce thaws the icicles, 3
 And let us make incision° for your love
 To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
 I tell thee, lady, this aspect° of mine
 Hath feared the valiant.° By my love I swear,
 The best-regarded virgins of our clime 10
 Have loved it too. I would not change this hue,
 Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Portia. In terms of choice° I am not solely led
 By nice° direction of a maiden's eyes.
 Besides, the lott'ry of my destiny 15

11.12 shadowed dark 2 livery uniform for a king's or nobleman's retainers 5 Phoebus' the sun-god's 6 make incision cut our flesh 8 aspect (pronounced "a-spèct") 9 feared the vallant caused the valiant to fear 13 In terms of choice with respect to my choice 14 nice fastidious

Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.
 But if my father had not scanted° me,
 And hedged me by his wit° to yield myself
 His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
 20 Yourself, renownèd Prince, then stood as fair
 As any comer I have looked on yet
 For my affection.

Morocco. Even for that I thank you.
 Therefore I pray you lead me to the caskets
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar,
 25 That slew the Sophy,° and a Persian prince
 That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
 I would o'erstare° the sternest eyes that look,
 Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
 Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
 30 Yea, mock the lion when 'a° roars for prey,
 To win thee, lady. But alas the while,
 If Hercules and Lichas° play at dice
 Which is the better man, the greater throw
 May turn by fortune from the weaker hand.
 35 So is Alcides° beaten by his page,
 And so may I, blind Fortune leading me,
 Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
 And die with grieving.

Portia. You must take your chance,
 And either not attempt to choose at all,
 40 Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
 Never to speak to lady afterward
 In way of marriage. Therefore be advised.°

Morocco. Nor will not.° Come, bring me unto my
 chance.

Portia. First, forward to the temple; after dinner
 Your hazard shall be made.

17 scanted limited 18 hedged me by his wit fenced me in by his
 clever intellect 25 Sophy Shah of Persia 27 o'erstare outstare
 30 'a he 32 Lichas Hercules' page 35 Alcides Hercules 42 be
 advised consider well 43 Nor will not nor will I (ever woo another
 for my wife)

Morocco.

Good fortune then,

45

To make me blest or cursèd'st among men!

[*Flourish of cornets.*] *Exeunt.*

[Scene II. Venice. A street.]

Enter [Launcelot Gobbo,] the Clown, alone.

Launcelot. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me, "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good Launcelot Gobbo—use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says, "No. Take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo," or as aforesaid, "honest Launcelot Gobbo, do not run; scorn running with thy heels."° Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. "Fia!"° says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend. "For the heavens,° rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience hanging about the neck of my heart says very wisely to me, "My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son"—or rather an honest woman's son, for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste°—Well, my conscience says, "Launcelot, budge not." "Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well." "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well." To be ruled by my conscience,

II.ii. 9 scorn running with thy heels (1) scorn to run away with your feet (2) scorn utterly to run 11 Fia! (from Italian *via*, away) 11-12 For the heavens by heaven, or for heaven's sake (in either case a grotesque thing for the fiend to say) 17-18 did something smack ... had a kind of taste (both phrases indicate a tendency to vice)

I should stay with the Jew my master who (God
 25 bless the mark!)° is a kind of devil; and to run away
 from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend who,
 saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly
 the Jew is the very devil incarnation;° and in my
 conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard con-
 science to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew.
 30 The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run,
 fiend; my heels are at your commandment, I will
 run.

Enter Old Gobbo with a basket.

Gobbo. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is
 the way to Master Jew's?

35 *Launcelot.* [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten
 father who, being more than sand-blind,° high-
 gravel-blind,° knows me not. I will try confusions
 with him.

Gobbo. Master young gentleman, I pray you which is
 40 the way to Master Jew's?

Launcelot. Turn up on your right hand at the next
 turning, but at the next turning of all, on your left;
 marry,° at the very next turning turn of no hand,
 but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

45 *Gobbo.* Be God's sonties,° 'twill be a hard way to hit!
 Can you tell me whether one Launcelot that dwells
 with him, dwell with him or no?

Launcelot. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?
 50 [*Aside*] Mark me now! Now will I raise the
 waters.°—Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

23-24 God bless the mark! (used, like "saving your reverence" in
 line 26, to avert a bad omen) 27 incarnation (blunder for "in-
 carnate") 36 sand-blind dull of sight 36-37 high-gravel-blind
 (Launcelot's comic superlative for "sand-blind") 43 marry (a
 mild interjection, originally an oath, by the Virgin Mary) 45 Be
 God's sonties by God's little saints 49-50 raise the waters rouse a
 storm of emotion (a nautical metaphor?)

Gobbo. No master,^o sir, but a poor man's son. His father, though I say't, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.^o

Launcelot. Well, let his father be what 'a will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

55

Gobbo. Your worship's friend,^o and Launcelot, sir.

Launcelot. But I pray you, ergo^o old man, ergo I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gobbo. Of Launcelot, an't^o please your mastership.

Launcelot. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father, for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

60

65

Gobbo. Marry, God forbid! The boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Launcelot. [*Aside*] Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff, or a prop?^o Do you know me, father?^o

Gobbo. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman, but I pray you tell me, is my boy—God rest his soul—alive or dead?

70

Launcelot. Do you not know me, father?^o

Gobbo. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind! I know you not.

Launcelot. Nay, indeed if you had your eyes you might fail of the knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. [*Kneels, with his back to his father.*] Give me your blessing. Truth will come to light; murder

75

51 No master (as a servant, Launcelot has no claim to the title of master) 52-53 exceeding . . . to live poverty-stricken and well-to-do 56 Your worship's friend (he politely insists on his son's humble status) 57 ergo therefore 59 an't if it 68-69 Do I . . . a prop? (spoken directly to the audience) 69, 73 father (a term of courtesy often used by the young to the old, without implying blood relationship)

80 cannot be hid long—a man's son may, but in the end truth will out.

Gobbo. Pray you, sir, stand up. I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

85 *Launcelot.* Pray you let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing. I am Launcelot—your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gobbo. I cannot think you are my son.

90 *Launcelot.* I know not what I shall think of that; but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

95 *Gobbo.* Her name is Margery indeed! I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be, what a beard^o hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse^o has on his tail.

Launcelot. [*Rises*] It should seem then that Dobbin's tail grows backward. I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

100 *Gobbo.* Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

105 *Launcelot.* Well, well; but for mine own part, as I have set up my rest^o to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew. Give him a present? Give him a halter!^o I am famished in his service; you may tell^o every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come. Give me your prèsent to one Master Bassanio, who indeed
110 gives rare new liveries. If I serve not him I will run

94 beard (the sand-blind father places his hand on his son's head, and mistakes Launcelot's fashionable long hair for a huge beard)
96 fill-horse cart horse 104 set up my rest wagered all (with word play on "rest" and "run") 106 halter hangman's noose 107 tell count

as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune, here comes the man. To him, father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter Bassanio, with [Leonardo and] a Follower or two.

Bassanio. You may do so, but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. 115
See these letters delivered, put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon^o to my lodging.
[*Exit one of his men.*]

Launcelot. To him, father!

Gobbo. God bless your worship!

Bassanio. Gramercy.^o Wouldst thou aught with me? 120

Gobbo. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy—

Launcelot. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man, that would, sir, as my father shall specify—

Gobbo. He hath a great infection,^o sir, as one would say, to serve— 125

Launcelot. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify—

Gobbo. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins.^o 130

Launcelot. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being I hope an old man, shall frutify^o unto you—

Gobbo. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is— 135

117 anon straightway 120 Gramercy many thanks (French *grand merci*) 124 infection (Gobbo's mistake for "affection," i.e., liking) 130 cater-cousins great friends 133 frutify (for "fructify," a blunder for a word like "signify")

Launcelot. In very brief, the suit is impertinent^o to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man, and though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

140 *Bassanio.* One speak for both. What would you?

Launcelot. Serve you, sir.

Gobbo. That is the very defect^o of the matter, sir.

Bassanio. I know thee well; thou hast obtained thy suit.

Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
145 And hath preferred^o thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Launcelot. The old proverb^o is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir. You have
150 the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

Bassanio. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son;

Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. [*To a Servant*] Give him a livery
More guarded^o than his fellows'. See it done.

155 *Launcelot.* Father, in. I cannot get a service; no! I have ne'er a tongue in my head! Well! [*Studies his palm.*] If any man in Italy have a fairer table^o which doth offer to swear upon a book—I shall have good fortune! Go to, here's a simple line of life. Here's a
160 small trifle of wives. Alas, fifteen wives is nothing; eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man. And then to scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed! Here are simple scapes.^o Well, if Fortune be a
165 woman, she's a good wench for this gear.^o Father,

136 *impertinent* (for "pertinent") 142 *defect* (for "effect") 145 *preferred* recommended for a higher position 148 *proverb* (such as, "He that hath the grace of God hath enough") 154 *guarded* ornamented 157 *table palm* 164 *scapes* escapes 165 *gear* business, i.e., the good fortune that he pretends to read in his palm

come. I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling.

Exit Clown [Launcelot, with Old Gobbo].

Bassanio. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestowed,
Return in haste, for I do feast tonight
My best-esteemed acquaintance. Hie thee, go. 170

Leonardo. My best endeavors shall be done herein.

Enter Gratiano.

Gratiano. Where's your master?

Leonardo. Yonder, sir, he walks.
Exit Leonardo.

Gratiano. Signior Bassanio!

Bassanio. Gratiano!

Gratiano. I have suit to you.

Bassanio. You have obtained it! 175

Gratiano. You must not deny me. I must go with you
to Belmont.

Bassanio. Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:
Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice—
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults; 180
But where thou art not known—why, there they
show

Something too liberal.^o Pray thee take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior
I be misconstr^ored^o in the place I go to, 185
And lose my hopes.

Gratiano. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,^o
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,

182 liberal free (a kind word to describe Gratiano!) 185 mls-
const^ored misconstrued 187 habit (1) bearing (2) garment

Wear prayer books in my pocket, look demurely—
 190 Nay more, while grace is saying hood mine eyes
 Thus with my hat, and sigh and say Amen,
 Use all the observance of civility°
 Like one well studied in a sad ostent°
 To please his grandam, never trust me more.

195 *Bassanio*. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gratiano. Nay, but I bar tonight. You shall not gauge
 me

By what we do tonight.

Bassanio. No, that were pity.

I would entreat you rather to put on
 Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
 200 That purpose merriment. But fare you well;
 I have some business.

Gratiano. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest,
 But we will visit you at supper time. *Exeunt.*

[Scene III. *Venice. Shylock's house.*]

Enter Jessica and [Launcelot] the Clown.

Jessica. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so;
 Our house is hell, and thou a merry devil
 Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
 But fare thee well; there is a ducat for thee.
 5 And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
 Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.
 Give him this letter; do it secretly.
 And so farewell. I would not have my father
 See me in talk with thee.

192 civility civilized behavior 193 sad ostent sober and earnest
 appearance

Launcelot. Adieu!° Tears exhibit° my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew, if a Christian do not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived.° But adieu! These foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit. Adieu! 10

Jessica. Farewell, good Launcelot. [*Exit Launcelot.*] 15
 Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
 To be ashamed to be my father's child!
 But though I am a daughter to his blood,
 I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
 If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
 Become a Christian and thy loving wife! 20 *Exit.*

[Scene IV. *Venice. A street.*]

Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salerio, and Solanio.

Lorenzo. Nay, we will slink away in supper time,
 Disguise us at my lodging, and return
 All in an hour.

Gratiano. We have not made good preparation.

Salerio. We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.° 3

Solanio. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered,°
 And better in my mind not undertook.

Lorenzo. 'Tis now but four of clock. We have two
 hours
 To furnish us.

II.iii.10 *Adieu* (perhaps not merely "good-bye," but "I commend you to God") 10 *exhibit* (for "inhibit") 11-13 *if a . . . deceived* (perhaps Launcelot is giving a hint of what happens in II.v, but perhaps "do" should be emended to "did," and "get" should be understood in the sense of "beget") II.iv.5 *spoke us yet of torchbearers* talked about getting torchbearers (who were regularly used in this sort of street festivity) 6 *quaintly ordered* artfully arranged

Enter Launcelot [with a letter].

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

10 *Launcelot.* And it shall please you to break up° this,
it shall seem to signify.

Lorenzo. I know the hand. In faith, 'tis a fair hand,
And whiter than the paper it° writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gratiano. Love-news, in faith!

15 *Launcelot.* By your leave, sir.

Lorenzo. Whither goest thou?

Launcelot. Marry, sir, to bid° my old master the Jew
to sup tonight with my new master the Christian.

Lorenzo. Hold here, take this. [*Gives money.*] Tell
gentle° Jessica

20 I will not fail her. Speak it privately.

Exit Clown [Launcelot].

Go, gentlemen;

Will you prepare you for this masque tonight?

I am provided of a torchbearer.

Salerio. Ay marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

Solanio. And so will I.

25 *Lorenzo.* Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salerio. 'Tis good we do so. *Exit [with Solanio].*

Gratiano. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

30 *Lorenzo.* I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnished with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,

10 break up open 13 ft i.e., the hand 17 bid ask 19, 34 gentle
charming and possessed of all attributes of a lady (with a pun on
"gentile," as elsewhere)

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;
 And never dare misfortune cross her foot,³⁵
 Unless she do it under this excuse,
 That she is issue to a faithless³⁷ Jew.
 Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest.
 Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer.³⁹

Exit [with Gratiano].

[Scene V. Venice. Before Shylock's house.]

*Enter [Shylock the] Jew and [Launcelot,] his man
 that was the Clown.*

Shylock. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy
 judge,
 The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio.—
 What,³⁵ Jessica!—Thou shalt not gormandize
 As thou hast done with me.—What, Jessica!—
 And sleep, and snore, and rend apparel out.—
 Why, Jessica, I say!

Launcelot. Why, Jessica!

Shylock. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Launcelot. Your worship was wont to tell me I could
 do nothing without bidding.

Enter Jessica.

Jessica. Call you? What is your will?

10

Shylock. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.
 There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
 I am not bid for love—they flatter me.
 But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
 The prodigal Christian. Jessica my girl,

15

³⁵ cross her foot cross her path ³⁷ faithless lacking the Christian
 faith ³⁹ torchbearer i.e., disguised as a page II.v.3 What (excla-
 mation of impatience, like "Why" in line 6)

Look to my house. I am right loath to go.
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of moneybags tonight.°

20 *Launcelot.* I beseech you, sir, go. My young master
doth expect your reproach.°

Shylock. So do I his.

Launcelot. And they have conspired together. I will
not say you shall see a masque, but if you do, then
it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding
25 on Black Monday° last at six o'clock i' th' morning,
falling out that year on Ash Wednesday was four
year in th' afternoon.°

Shylock. What, are there masques? Hear you me,
Jessica:

30 Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,°
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces;°
But stop my house's ears—I mean my casements;
35 Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth tonight;
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah.
Say I will come.

Launcelot. I will go before, sir.
40 Mistress, look out at window for all this:
There will come a Christian by
Will be worth a Jewess' eye.

[Exit.]

18 tonight last night (the premonition is serious for Shylock, comic for the audience) 20 reproach (*Launcelot's* word for "approach")
25 Black Monday Easter Monday 26-27 falling . . . afternoon
(apparently *Launcelot* means "four years ago on Ash Wednesday," but he may be intentionally talking nonsense) 30 wry-necked fife
fife-player with neck twisted to one side (the mouthpiece of the Elizabethan fife was set at an angle, and these words are therefore sometimes taken to mean the instrument; but *Shylock* would be less scornful of the instrument than of the gay fool with his neck at a crazy angle) 33 varnished faces painted masks (*Shylock* no doubt puns on "varnished" in the sense of "insincere")

Shylock. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring,^o ha?
Jessica. His words were "Farewell, mistress"—nothing else.

Shylock. The patch^o is kind enough, but a huge feeder, 43
Snail-slow in profit,^o and he sleeps by day
More than the wildcat. Drones hive not with me;
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrowed purse. Well, Jessica, go in; 50
Perhaps I will return immediately.
Do as I bid you, shut doors after you.
Fast bind, fast find,
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. *Exit.*

Jessica. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost, 55
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. *Exit.*

[Scene VI. Venice. Before Shylock's house.]

Enter the Masquers, Gratiano and Salerio.

Gratiano. This is the penthouse^o under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

Salerio. His hour is almost past.

Gratiano. And it is marvel he outdwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salerio. O ten times faster Venus' pigeons^o fly 5
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged faith^o unforfeited!

43 Hagar's offspring Ishmael, son of Abraham by the servant Hagar (mother and son were cast out by Abraham after Isaac's birth)
45 patch fool 46 in profit in any profitable activity II.vi.1 pent-house shelter formed by a projecting roof 5 Venus' pigeons (they drew her chariot) 7 obliged faith faith pledged (in marriage)

Gratiano. That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
 With that keen appetite that he sits down?
 10 Where is the horse that doth untread again
 His tedious measures° with the unbated fire
 That he did pace them first? All things that are
 Are with more spirit chasèd than enjoyed.

How like a younger° or a prodigal
 15 The scarfèd° bark puts from her native bay,
 Hugged and embracèd by the strumpet wind!
 How like the prodigal doth she return,
 With over-weathered° ribs and ragged sails,
 Lean, rent, and beggared by the strumpet wind!

Enter Lorenzo.

20 *Salerio.* Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Lorenzo. Sweet friends, your patience for my long
 abode.°

Not I but my affairs have made you wait.

When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
 I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;

25 Here dwells my father Jew. Ho, who's within?

[Enter] Jessica above [in boy's clothes].

Jessica. Who are you? Tell me for more certainty,
 Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lorenzo. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jessica. Lorenzo certain, and my love indeed,

30 For who love I so much? And now who knows
 But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lorenzo. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that
 thou art.

Jessica. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
 I am glad 'tis night, you° do not look on me,

11 measures paces 14 younger younger son 15 scarfèd decorated
 with scarfs (i.e., flags and streamers) 18 over-weathered long ex-
 posed to stormy weather 21 abode delay 34 'tis night, you (an
 ellipsis, "and" being understood)

For I am much ashamed of my exchange.^o 35
 But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
 The pretty follies that themselves commit;
 For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
 To see me thus transformèd to a boy.

Lorenzo. Descend, for you must be my torchbearer. 40

Jessica. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
 They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.^o
 Why, 'tis an office of discovery,^o love,
 And I should be obscured.

Lorenzo. So are you, sweet,
 Even in the lovely garnish^o of a boy. 45
 But come at once;
 For the close^o night doth play the runaway,
 And we are stayed for at Bassanio's feast.

Jessica. I will make fast the doors and gild myself
 With some moe^o ducats, and be with you straight. 50
 [Exit above.]

Gratiano. Now by my hood, a gentle^o and no Jew!

Lorenzo. Beshrow^o me but I love her heartily!
 For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
 And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
 And true she is, as she hath proved herself; 55
 And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
 Shall she be placèd in my constant soul.

Enter Jessica [below].

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen, away!
 Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.
Exit [with Jessica and Salerio].

Enter Antonio.

Antonio. Who's there? 60

35 exchange i.e., of clothes 42 light immodest (with a pun) 43 office of discovery task in which my disguise will be revealed
 45 garnish pleasing attire 47 close secret 50 moe more 51 gentle refined lady (with the usual pun on "gentile") 52 Beshrow (a light word for "curse")

Gratiano. Signior Antonio?

Antonio. Fie, fie, Gratiano, where are all the rest?

'Tis nine o'clock, our friends all stay for you.

No masque tonight. The wind is come about;

65 *Bassanio* presently° will go aboard.

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gratiano. I am glad on't. I desire no more delight

Than to be under sail and gone tonight. *Exeunt.*

[Scene VII. Belmont. Portia's house.]

[*Flourish of cornets.*] Enter Portia with Morocco
and both their Trains.

Portia. Go, draw aside the curtains and discover°

The several caskets to this noble Prince.

Now make your choice.

Morocco. This first, of gold, who this inscription bears,

5 "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men
desire."

The second, silver, which this promise carries,

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."

This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,°

"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he
hath."

10 How shall I know if I do choose the right?

Portia. The one of them contains my picture, Prince.

If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Morocco. Some god direct my judgment! Let me see—

65 presently at this present moment II.vii.1 discover reveal 8 as
blunt as blunt as the lead is dull (with quibbles on "blunt" in the
senses of "abrupt in speech and manner" and of "not sharp," and
on "dull" in the senses of "not sharp" and "not shining")

I will survey th' inscriptions back again.

What says this leaden casket?

"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."

15

Must give—for what? For lead! Hazard for lead?

This casket threatens; men that hazard all

Do it in hope of fair advantages.

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;

20

I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver with her virgin hue?

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."

As much as he deserves? Pause there, Morocco,

And weigh thy value with an even hand:

25

If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,^o

Thou dost deserve enough, and yet enough

May not extend so far as to the lady;

And yet to be afeard of my deserving

Were but a weak disabling^o of myself.

30

As much as I deserve? Why that's the lady!

I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,

In graces, and in qualities of breeding;

But more than these, in love I do deserve.

What if I strayed no farther, but chose here?

35

Let's see once more this saying graved in gold:

"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

Why that's the lady! All the world desires her;

From the four corners of the earth they come

To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.

40

The Hyrcanian deserts^o and the vasty wilds

Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now

For princes to come view fair Portia.

The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head

Spets in the face of heaven, is no bar

45

To stop the foreign spirits, but they come

As o'er a brook to see fair Portia.

One of these three contains her heavenly picture.

Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation

26 estimation reputation 30 disabling undervaluing 41 Hyrcanian
deserts Persian deserts (famous for savage beasts)

50 To think so base a thought; it were too gross°
 To rib her cerecloth° in the obscure° grave.
 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
 O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
 55 Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel
 Stampèd in gold—but that's insculped° upon;
 But here an angel° in a golden bed
 Lies all within. Deliver me the key.
 60 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Portia. There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there,
 Then I am yours. [*He opens the golden casket.*]

Morocco. O hell! What have we here?
 A carrion Death,° within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

65 "All that glisters is not gold;°
 Often have you heard that told.
 Many a man his life hath sold
 But my outside to behold;
 70 Gilded tombs do worms infold.
 Had you been as wise as bold,
 Young in limbs, in judgment old,
 Your answer had not been inscrolled.°
 Fare you well, your suit is cold."

Cold indeed, and labor lost.
 75 Then farewell heat, and welcome frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
 To take a tedious leave. Thus losers part.

Exit [with his Train. Flourish of cornets].

Portia. A gentle° riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
 Let all of his complexion° choose me so. *Exeunt.*

50 it were too gross lead would be too coarse (bodies of wealthy persons were often encased in lead). 51 cerecloth waxed embalming cloth 51 obscure (accent on first syllable) 57 insculped sculptured 58 angel i.e., Portia's picture 63 Death death's head 65 All . . . gold (proverbial) 72 inscrolled written on the scroll 78 gentle well-bred 79 complexion temperament (not merely coloring)

[Scene VIII. *Venice. A street.*]

Enter Salerio and Solanio.

Salerio. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail;
With him is Gratiano gone along,
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

Solanio. The villain^o Jew with outcries raised the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship. 3

Salerio. He came too late, the ship was under sail.
But there the Duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica.
Besides, Antonio certified the Duke 10
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

Solanio. I never heard a passion^o so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter! 15
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
And jewels—two stones, two rich and precious
stones, 20
Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!"

Salerio. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Solanio. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,^o 25
Or he shall pay for this.

II.viii.4 villain low-bred fellow (not scoundrel; a vaguer term than today) 12 passion emotional outburst 25 keep his day pay on the exact day appointed

Salerio.

Marry, well rememb'ed.

I reasoned° with a Frenchman yesterday,
 Who told me, in the narrow seas° that part
 The French and English there miscarried
 30 A vessel of our country richly fraught.°
 I thought upon Antonio when he told me,
 And wished in silence that it were not his.

Solanio. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear.
 Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

35 *Salerio.* A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.

I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.
 Bassanio told him he would make some speed
 Of his return; he answered, "Do not so.
 Slubber° not business for my sake, Bassanio,
 40 But stay the very riping of the time;
 And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
 Let it not enter in your mind of love.°
 Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
 To courtship and such fair ostents° of love
 45 As shall conveniently become you there."
 And even there, his eye being big with tears,
 Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
 And with affection wondrous sensible°
 He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

50 *Solanio.* I think he only loves the world for him.
 I pray thee let us go and find him out,
 And quicken his embracèd heaviness°
 With some delight or other.

Salerio.

Do we so.

Exeunt.

27 reasoned talked 28 narrow seas English Channel 30 fraught
 freighted 39 Slubber hurry over in a slovenly way 42 mind of
 love loving thoughts (probably about both Antonio and Portia)
 44 ostents shows, expressions 48 affection wondrous sensible won-
 derfully strong emotion 52 quicken his embracèd heaviness lighten
 the gloom which he has embraced

[Scene IX. Belmont. Portia's house.]

Enter Nerissa and a Servitor.

Nerissa. Quick, quick I pray thee, draw the curtain straight.°

The Prince of Aragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election° presently.°

[*Flourish of cornets.*] *Enter Aragon, his Train, and Portia.*

Portia. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince.
If you choose that wherein I am contained, 3
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized;
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

Aragon. I am enjoined by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one 10
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage;
Lastly, if I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone. 13

Portia. To these injunctions everyone doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Aragon. And so° have I addressed me.° Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead.
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath." 20
You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? Ha, let me see!
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

II.ix.1 straight at once 3 election choice 3 presently at this present moment, instantly 18 so on these terms 18 have I addressed me I have addressed myself (to this affair)

What many men desire—that “many” may be meant
 By° the fool multitude that choose by show,
 Not learning more than the fond° eye doth teach,
 Which pries not to th’ interior, but like the martlet°
 Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
 Even in the force and road of casualty.°

I will not choose what many men desire,
 Because I will not jump with° common spirits
 And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
 Why then, to thee, thou silver treasure house!
 Tell me once more what title thou dost bear.

“Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.”
 And well said too, for who shall go about
 To cozen° fortune, and be honorable
 Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
 To wear an undeservèd dignity.

O that estates, degrees,° and offices°
 Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
 Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
 How many then should cover° that stand bare!
 How many be commanded that command;
 How much low peasantry would then be gleanèd°
 From the true seed of honor!° And how much honor
 Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times
 To be new varnished.° Well, but to my choice.

“Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.”
 I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
 And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*]

Portia. Too long a pause for that which you find there.°

25 By with regard to 26 fond foolish 27 martlet martin, a bird
 29 in . . . casualty exposed to the tyrannic force of mischance and
 lying in the open road 31 jump with accord with 37 cozen cheat
 40 degrees ranks 40 offices official positions 43 cover wear hats,
 in sign of authority 45 gleanèd picked out, as in gleaning grain
 (cf. line 47, “Picked from the chaff”) 46 seed of honor descendants
 of ancient nobility 48 To be new varnished to have the luster of
 their family restored 52 Too . . . there (probably an aside)

Aragon. What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot
Presenting me a schedule!° I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he
deserves."

55

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

Portia. To offend and judge are distinct offices,
And of opposèd natures.°

60

Aragon.

What is here?

"The fire° seven times tried this;°
Seven times tried that judgment is
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss.
There be fools alive iwis,°
Silvered o'er,° and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I° will ever be your head.
So be gone; you are sped."°

65

70

Still more fool I shall appear

By the time I linger here.

With one fool's head I came to woo,

But I go away with two.

75

Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,

Patiently to bear my wroath.° [*Exit with his Train.*]

Portia. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

O these deliberate fools! When they do choose,

They have the wisdom by their wit° to lose.

80

Nerissa. The ancient saying is no heresy:

Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Portia. Come draw the curtain, Nerissa.

54 schedule scroll 60-61 To offend . . . natures the offender is not
to judge himself 62 fire (pronounced ff-er) 62 this i.e., the silver
of the casket 67 lwis certainly 68 Silvered o'er i.e., with the gray
hair usually associated with wisdom 70 I "the blinking idiot" of
line 53 71 you are sped you have achieved your fortune 77 wroath
heavy lot (?) 80 wit cleverness

Enter Messenger.

Messenger. Where is my lady?

Portia. Here. What would my lord?

85 *Messenger.* Madam, there is alighted at your gate
 A young Venetian, one that comes before
 To signify th' approaching of his lord,
 From whom he bringeth sensible regrets,^o
 To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
 90 Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen^o
 So likely^o an ambassador of love.
 A day in April never came so sweet
 To show how costly^o summer was at hand,
 As this forespurrer^o comes before his lord.

95 *Portia.* No more, I pray thee. I am half afeard
 Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
 Thou spend'st such high-day wit^o in praising him.
 Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see
 Quick Cupid's post^o that comes so mannerly.

100 *Nerissa.* Bassanio, Lord Love,^o if thy will it be!

Exeunt.

84 What would my lord? (a gay, jesting retort to the messenger's "my lady") 88 sensible regrets a quibble: greetings (1) expressing strong feeling, and (2) conveying tangible gifts 90 yet I have not seen not yet have I seen 91 likely promising 93 costly rich, plentiful 94 forespurrer advance messenger (one who spurs his horse ahead of his party) 97 high-day wit imagination befitting a festive occasion 99 post messenger 100 Lord Love god of love

[ACT III]

Scene I. *Venice. A street.*]

[*Enter*] *Solanio and Salerio.*

Solanio. Now what news on the Rialto?

Salerio. Why, yet it lives there unchecked^o that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wracked on the narrow seas^o—the Goodwins^o I think they call the place—a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried as they say, if my gossip^o Report be an honest woman of her word. 5

Solanio. I would she were as lying a gossip in that, as ever knapped^o ginger or made her neighbors believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity^o or crossing the plain highway of talk,^o that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio—O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!— 10

Salerio. Come, the full stop.^o 15

Solanio. Ha, what sayest thou? Why the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salerio. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

III.i.2 it lives there unchecked it is reported without dispute 3-4 narrow seas English Channel 4 Goodwins Goodwin Sands, a shoal 6-7 gossip talkative comrade 9 knapped snapped, bit 11 slips of prolixity long-winded lies 11-12 crossing . . . talk going counter to honest speech 15 Come, the full stop come to the end of your sentence

Solanio. Let me say Amen betimes,^o lest the devil cross
 20 my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter Shylock.

How now, Shylock? What news among the merchants?

Shylock. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

25 *Salerio.* That's certain. I for my part knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Solanio. And Shylock for his own part knew the bird was fledge,^o and then it is the complexion^o of them all to leave the dam.

30 *Shylock.* She is damned for it.

Salerio. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shylock. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Solanio. Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it^o at these years?

35 *Shylock.* I say my daughter is my flesh and my blood.

Salerio. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory, more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had
 40 any loss at sea or no?

Shylock. There I have another bad match! A bank-
 45 rout,^o a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto, a beggar that was used to come so smug^o upon the mart! Let him look to his bond. He was wont to call me usurer. Let him look to his bond. He was wont to lend money for a Christian cursy.^o Let him look to his bond.

19 *betimes* promptly 28 *fledge* feathered, able to fly 28 *complexion* natural disposition 33 *Rebels it* (a contemptuous pun on "flesh and blood" in the sense of fleshly desire) 41-42 *bankrout* bankrupt
 43 *smug* well-groomed 46 *cursy* courtesy

Salerio. Why, I am sure if he forfeit thou wilt not take his flesh. What's that good for?

Shylock. To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, 50
it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and
hind'ered me half a million, laughed at my losses,
mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted
my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine ene- 55
mies—and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not
a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimen-
sions,^o senses, affections,^o passions?—fed with the
same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to
the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed 60
and cooled by the same winter and summer as a
Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you
tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we
not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?
If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in
that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humili- 65
ty?^o Revenge! If a Christian wrong a Jew, what
should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why
revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and
it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Man from Antonio.

[*Man.*] Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house, 70
and desires to speak with you both.

Salerio. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter Tubal.

Solanio. Here comes another of the tribe. A third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

Exeunt Gentlemen [Solanio, Salerio, and Man].

Shylock. How now, Tubal! What news from Genoa? 75
Hast thou found my daughter?

56-57 *dimensions* limbs, features, etc. 57 *affections* feelings 65-66 *what is his humility?* what does his Christian humility amount to?

Tubal. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shylock. Why there, there, there, there! A diamond gone cost me two thousand ducats in Frankford! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so! And I know not what's spent in the search. Why thou loss upon loss—the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief!—and no satisfaction, no revenge, nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders, no sighs but o' my breathing, no tears but o' my shedding.

Tubal. Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—

Shylock. What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

Tubal. Hath an argosy cast away coming from Tripolis.

Shylock. I thank God, I thank God! Is it true, is it true?

Tubal. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wrack.

Shylock. I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news, good news! Ha, ha! Heard in Genoa?

Tubal. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night fourscore ducats.

Shylock. Thou stick'st a dagger in me. I shall never see my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting, fourscore ducats!

Tubal. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice that swear he cannot choose but break.^o

108 break go bankrupt

Shylock. I am very glad of it. I'll plague him; I'll torture him. I am glad of it.

110

Tubal. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shylock. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise; I had it of Leah^o when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

115

Tubal. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shylock. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer;^o bespeak^o him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him if he forfeit, for were he out of Venice I can make what merchandise^o I will. Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.

120

Exeunt.

[Scene II. Belmont. Portia's house.]

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, [Nerissa,] and all their Trains.

Portia. I pray you tarry; pause a day or two
Before you hazard, for in choosing wrong
I lose your company. Therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me (but it is not love)
I would not lose you; and you know yourself
Hate counsels not in such a quality.^o
But lest you should not understand me well—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought—
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you

5

10

114 Leah Shylock's wife 119 officer (to arrest Antonio) 119 bespeak engage 121 merchandise wealth III.ii.6 in such a quality in such a manner of speech as I am using to you

How to choose right, but then I am forsworn.
 So will I never be. So may you miss me.
 But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin—
 That I had been forsworn. Beshrow^o your eyes!
 15 They have o'erlooked^o me and divided me;
 One half of me is yours, the other half yours—
 Mine own I would say; but if mine then yours,
 And so all yours! O these naughty^o times
 Puts bars between the owners and their rights!
 20 And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,^o
 Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
 I speak too long, but 'tis to peize^o the time,
 To eche^o it and to draw it out in length,
 To stay you from election.

Bassanio.

Let me choose,

25 For as I am, I live upon the rack.^o

Portia. Upon the rack, Bassanio? Then confess
 What treason there is mingled with your love.^o

Bassanio. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
 Which makes me fear th' enjoying of my love.
 30 There may as well be amity and life
 'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

Portia. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
 Where men enforced^o do speak anything.

Bassanio. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

Portia. Well then, confess and live.

35 *Bassanio.*

Confess and love

Had been the very sum of my confession!

O happy torment, when my torturer

Doth teach me answers for deliverance.^o

14 Beshrow curse (but a playful word) 15 o'erlooked bewitched
 18 naughty wicked 20 Prove it so if it should prove so 22 peize
 weigh down, hence retard 23 eche eke out, i.e., lengthen 25 rack
 instrument of torture, on which the body was pulled with great
 force, often breaking the joints; used to force confessions, especially
 in trials for treason 27 What treason . . . love (spoken playfully)
 33 enforced compelled (by torture) 38 answers for deliverance
 answers to free me from torture

But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

Portia. Away then! I am locked in one of them;
 If you do love me, you will find me out. 40
 Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
 Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
 Then if he lose he makes a swanlike end,^o
 Fading in music. That the comparison 45
 May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
 And wat'ry deathbed for him. He may win;
 And what is music then? Then music is
 Even as the flourish^o when true subjects bow
 To a new-crownèd monarch. Such it is 50
 As are those dulcet sounds in break of day,
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
 And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
 With no less presence,^o but with much more love,
 Than young Alcides,^o when he did redeem 55
 The virgin tribute^o paid by howling Troy
 To the sea monster. I stand for sacrifice;
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
 With blearèd visages come forth to view
 The issue of th' exploit. Go, Hercules! 60
 Live thou,^o I live. With much, much more dismay^o
 I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.^o

*A song the whilst Bassanio comments on the
 caskets to himself.*

Tell me where is fancy^o bred,
 Or in the heart, or in the head?
 How begot, how nourishèd? 65
 Reply, reply.
 It is engend' red in the eyes,

44 swanlike end an end like the swan's (who was supposed never to sing until it sang enchantingly at its death) 49 flourish fanfare of trumpets 54 presence noble bearing 55 Alcides Hercules 56 virgin tribute Hesione, Priam's sister, who was offered as a divine sacrifice to be devoured by a sea monster; Hercules slew the monster and saved her 61 Live thou if thou live 61 dismay alarm and terror 62 fray combat 63 fancy love based only on the senses; especially the sight

With gazing fed, and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

70 Let us all ring fancy's knell.
I'll begin it—Ding, dong, bell.
All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bassanio. So^o may the outward shows be least
themselves;^o

The world is still^o deceived with ornament.
75 In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damnèd error but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,^o
80 Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
How many cowards whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
85 The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who inward searched, have livers white as milk!^o
And these assume but valor's excrement^o
To render them redoubted.^o Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
90 Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest^o that wear most of it:
So are those crispèd^o snaky golden locks,
Which maketh such wanton^o gambols with the wind
Upon supposèd fairness, often known
95 To be the dowry^o of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulcher.
Thus ornament is but the guilèd^o shore
To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf

73 So thus 73 least themselves least like what they really are
74 still continually 79 approve it with a text prove it by a bibli-
cal text 86 livers white as milk (a pale liver supposedly caused
cowardice) 87 excrement excrescence, outer appearance 88 re-
doubted dreaded 91 lightest (a pun on "light" in the sense of un-
chaste) 92 crispèd curled 93 wanton playful 95 dowry gift of
property, i.e., hair from a dead person's head 97 gullèd full of
guile, treacherous

Veiling an Indian^o beauty; in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on 100
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore then, thou gaudy
 gold,
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge^o
 'Tween man and man. But thou, thou meager^o lead
 Which rather threaten'st than dost promise aught, 105
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
 And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

Portia. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
 As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
 And shudd'ring fear, and green-eyed jealousy. 110
 O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy,
 In measure rain thy joy, scant^o this excess!
 I feel too much thy blessing. Make it less
 For fear I surfeit.^o

Bassanio. [*Opening the leaden casket*] What find I here?
 Fair Portia's counterfeit!^o What demigod^o 115
 Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,^o
 Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips
 Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar^o
 Should sunder such sweet friends.^o Here in her hairs 120
 The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
 A golden mesh t' entrap the hearts of men
 Faster^o than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes—
 How could he see to do them? Having made one,
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his 125
 And leave itself unfurnished.^o Yet look how far

99 **Indian** East Indian, hence dusky 103 **pale and common drudge**
 pale hack worker, i.e., silver 104 **meager** poverty-stricken, of slight
 value 112 **scant** lessen 114 **surfelt** grow sick with too much, i.e.,
 too much joy 115 **counterfeit** image 115 **demigod** i.e., half-divine
 painter 117 **the balls of mine** my eyeballs 119 **so sweet a bar** i.e.,
 Portia's breath 120 **sweet friends** i.e., her lips 123 **Faster** tighter
 126 **unfurnished** not provided with its mate (since the picture of the
 first eye has taken away both of the painter's eyes)

The substance^o of my praise doth wrong this shadow^o
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
 130 The continent and summary^o of my fortune.

"You that choose not by the view
 Chance as fair,^o and choose as true.
 Since this fortune falls to you,
 Be content and seek no new.
 135 If you be well pleased with this
 And hold your fortune for your bliss,
 Turn you where your lady is,
 And claim her with a loving kiss."

A gentle^o scroll. Fair lady, by your leave.

[Kisses her.]

140 I come by note,^o to give and to receive.
 Like one of two contending in a prize,^o
 That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
 Hearing applause and universal shout,
 Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
 145 Whether those peals of praise be his^o or no—
 So, thrice-fair lady, stand I even so,
 As doubtful whether what I see be true,
 Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

Portia. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
 150 Such as I am. Though for myself alone
 I would not be ambitious in my wish
 To wish myself much better, yet for you
 I would be trebled twenty times myself,
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more
 rich,

155 That only to stand high in your account,^o
 I might in virtues, beauties, livings,^o friends,

127, 129 The substance Portia herself 127, 128 this shadow her picture 130 The continent and summary that which contains and sums up 132 Chance as fair have as fair fortune 139 gentle courteous, well-bred 140 by note according to instructions (in lines 137-38) 141 prize contest for a prize, as in a tournament 145 his intended for him 155 account esteem, regard 156 livings possessions

Exceed account.^o But the full sum of me
Is sum of something—which, to term in gross,^o
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpracticed;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old 160
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all, is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king. 165
Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours
Is now converted.^o But now^o I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself 170
Are yours, my lord's. I give them with this ring,
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage^o the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on^o you.

Bassanio. Madam, you have bereft me of all words. 175
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins,
And there is such confusion in my powers
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a belovèd prince,^o there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleasèd multitude; 180
Where every something being blent together
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy
Expressed and not expressed. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence!
O then be bold to say Bassanio's dead! 185

Nerissa. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry "good joy." Good joy, my lord and lady!

157 account computation 158 term in gross describe in broad terms
167 converted changed, i.e., made yours 167 But now only now
173 presage foretell 174 vantage to exclaim on opportunity to cry
out against (lines 173-74 spoken playfully) 179 prince (a feminine
as well as a masculine noun; hence suitably applied to Portia)

Gratiano. My Lord Bassanio, and my gentle lady,

190 I wish you all the joy that you can wish—
For I am sure you can wish none from^o me;
And when your honors mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you
Even at that time I may be married too.

195 *Bassanio.* With all my heart, so^o thou canst get a wife.

Gratiano. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid.
You loved, I loved; for intermission^o
200 No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,^o
And swearing till my very roof^o was dry
205 With oaths of love, at last—if promise last^o—
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Portia. Is this true, Nerissa?

Nerissa. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

210 *Bassanio.* And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Gratiano. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bassanio. Our feast shall be much honored in your marriage.

Gratiano. We'll play with them the first boy for a thousand ducats.

215 *Nerissa.* What, and stake down?^o

Gratiano. No, we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake down.

191 from away from 195 so provided 199 intermission pausing
203 again i.e., again and again 204 roof roof of the mouth 205 if
promise last if her promise holds 215 stake down a betting term
(with an off-color pun)

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidell^o
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio!

*Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salerio, a Messenger
from Venice.*

Bassanio. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither, 220
If that the youth of my new int'rest^o here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Portia. So do I, my lord. 225
They are entirely welcome.

Lorenzo. I thank your honor. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here,
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did entreat me past all saying nay
To come with him along.

Salerio. I did, my lord, 230
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you.^o [*Gives Bassanio a letter.*]

Bassanio. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you tell me how my good friend doth.

Salerio. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind, 235
Nor well, unless in mind. His letter there
Will show you his estate.^o *Open the letter.*

Gratiano. Nerissa, cheer yond stranger; bid her
welcome.

Your hand, Salerio. What's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant,^o good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success; 240
We are the Jasons, we have won the Fleece.

218 infidel one who lacks the true faith (Gratiano applies the term
playfully to Jessica; cf. II.vi.51) 221 int'rest claim 232 Com-
mends him to you sends you his best wishes 236 estate state, con-
dition 239 royal merchant merchant prince

Salerio. I would you had won the fleece^o that he hath lost!

Portia. There are some shrowd^o contents in yond same paper

That steals the color from Bassanio's cheek:
 245 Some dear friend dead, else nothing in the world
 Could turn so much the constitution
 Of any constant man. What, worse and worse?
 With leave, Bassanio—I am half yourself,
 And I must freely have the half of anything
 That this same paper brings you.

250 *Bassanio.* O sweet Portia,
 Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
 That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
 When I did first impart my love to you,
 I freely told you all the wealth I had
 255 Ran in my veins—I was a gentleman.
 And then I told you true; and yet, dear lady,
 Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
 How much I was a braggart. When I told you
 My state^o was nothing, I should then have told you
 260 That I was worse than nothing; for indeed
 I have engaged^o myself to a dear friend,
 Engaged my friend to his mere^o enemy
 To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,
 The paper as the body of my friend,
 265 And every word in it a gaping wound
 Issuing lifeblood. But is it true, Salerio?
 Hath all his ventures failed? What, not one hit?
 From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
 From Lisbon, Barbary, and India,
 270 And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch
 Of merchant-marring rocks?

Salerio. Not one, my lord.
 Besides, it should appear that if he had
 The present^o money to discharge^o the Jew,

242 fleece (pun on "fleets") 243 shrowd evil, grievous; literally
 "cursed" 259 state estate, fortune 261 engaged pledged 262
 mere absolute 273 present ready 273 discharge pay

He would not take it. Never did I know
 A creature that did bear the shape of man 275
 So keen and greedy to confound° a man.
 He plies the Duke at morning and at night,
 And doth impeach the freedom of the state°
 If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
 The Duke himself, and the magnificoes 280
 Of greatest port° have all persuaded with him,
 But none can drive him from the envious° plea
 Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

Jessica. When I was with him, I have heard him swear
 To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen, 285
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
 Than twenty times the value of the sum
 That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
 If law, authority, and power deny not,
 It will go hard with poor Antonio. 290

Portia. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bassanio. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
 The best-conditioned° and unwearied spirit
 In doing courtesies, and one in whom
 The ancient Roman honor more appears 295
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Portia. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bassanio. For me, three thousand ducats.

Portia. What, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface° the bond.
 Double six thousand and then treble that, 300
 Before a friend of this description
 Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
 First go with me to church and call me wife,
 And then away to Venice to your friend!
 For never shall you lie by Portia's side 305

276 confound ruin, destroy 278 impeach . . . state charge that
 Venice is no free state 280-81 magnificoes/Of greatest port nobles
 of highest dignity 282 envious malignant 293 The best-condi-
 tioned of the best disposition 299 deface destroy

With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over;
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
310 Will live as maids and widows. Come away!
For you shall hence^o upon your wedding day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

315 [Bassanio. (*Reads*)] "Sweet Bassanio, my ships have
all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is
very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit. And since in
paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are
320 cleared between you and I if I might but see you at
my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure. If
your love do not persuade you to come, let not my
letter."

Portia. O love, dispatch all business and be gone!

Bassanio. Since I have your good leave to go away,
325 I will make haste; but till I come again
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. *Exeunt.*

[Scene III. Venice. A street.]

*Enter [Shylock] the Jew and Solanio and Antonio
and the Jailer.*

Shylock. Jailer, look to him. Tell not me of mercy.
This is the fool that lent out money gratis.
Jailer, look to him.

Antonio. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shylock. I'll have my bond! Speak not against my bond!

311 shall hence must go hence

I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
 Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,
 But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.
 The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
 Thou naughty⁹ jailer, that thou art so fond¹⁹
 To come abroad with him at his request.

3

10

Antonio. I pray thee hear me speak.

Shylock. I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak.
 I'll have my bond, and therefore speak no more.
 I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
 To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
 To Christian intercessors. Follow not.
 I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond.

15

Exit Jew.

Solanio. It is the most impenetrable cur
 That ever kept⁹ with men.

Antonio. Let him alone;
 I'll follow him no more with bootless⁹ prayers.
 He seeks my life. His reason well I know:
 I oft delivered from his forfeitures⁹
 Many that have at times made moan to me.
 Therefore he hates me.

20

Solanio. I am sure the Duke
 Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

25

Antonio. The Duke cannot deny the course of law;
 For the commodity⁹ that strangers⁹ have
 With us in Venice, if it be denied,
 Will much impeach the justice of the state,
 Since that the trade and profit of the city
 Consisteth of all nations. Therefore go.
 These griefs⁹ and losses have so bated⁹ me
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
 Tomorrow to my bloody creditor.

30

III.iii.9 naughty wicked 9 fond foolish 19 kept dwelt 20 boot-
 less unavailing 22 forfeitures penalties that he could have legally
 exacted 27 commodity commercial advantage 27 strangers for-
 eigners 32 griefs pains 32 bated reduced

35 Well, jailer, on. Pray God Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! *Exeunt.*

[Scene IV. Belmont. Portia's house.]

*Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and
[Balthasar,] a Man of Portia's.*

Lorenzo. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit^o
Of godlike amity,^o which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
5 But if you knew to whom you show this honor,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover^o of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.^o

10 *Portia.* I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now; for in companions
That do converse and waste^o the time together,
Whose souls do bear an egal^o yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
15 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
20 In purchasing^o the semblance^o of my soul
From out the state of hellish cruelty!
This comes too near the praising of myself;

III.iv.2 conceit idea, conception 3 amity friendship 7 lover friend
8-9 prouder . . . you prouder of this action than even your habitual
kindness can make you 12 converse and waste associate and spend
13 egal equal 20 purchasing gaining 20 semblance likeness (Portia
refers to the old idea that a genuine friend or lover is a second self.
Antonio is like Bassanio, and therefore like Portia)

Therefore no more of it. Hear other things:
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
 The husbandry^o and manage of my house,
 Until my lord's return. For mine own part,
 I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
 To live in prayer and contemplation,
 Only attended by Nerissa here,
 Until her husband and my lord's return.
 There is a monast'ry two miles off,
 And there we will abide. I do desire you
 Not to deny this imposition,^o
 The which my love and some necessity
 Now lays upon you.

25

30

Lorenzo. Madam, with all my heart;
 I shall obey you in all fair commands.

35

Portia. My people do already know my mind,
 And will acknowledge you and Jessica
 In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
 So fare you well till we shall meet again.

40

Lorenzo. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jessica. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Portia. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
 To wish it back on you. Fare you well, Jessica.

Exeunt [Jessica and Lorenzo].

45

Now, Balthasar,
 As I have ever found thee honest-true,
 So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
 And use thou all th' endeavor of a man
 In speed to Padua. See thou render this
 Into my cousin's hands, Doctor Bellario;
 And look what^o notes and garments he doth give
 thee
 Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed^o
 Unto the tranect,^o to the common ferry

50

25 husbandry care 33 imposition task that I impose 51 look
 what whatever 52 imagined speed speed of imagination 53 tra-
 nect ferry

Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words
 55 But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

Balthasar. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.^o
 [Exit.]

Portia. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
 That you yet know not of. We'll see our husbands
 Before they think of us.

Nerissa. Shall they see us?

60 *Portia.* They shall, Nerissa, but in such a habit^o
 That they shall think we are accomplishèd^o
 With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
 When we are both accoutered like young men,
 I'll prove the prettier^o fellow of the two,
 65 And wear my dagger with the braver grace,^o
 And speak between the change of man and boy
 With a reed^o voice, and turn two mincing steps
 Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
 Like a fine bragging youth; and tell quaint^o lies,
 70 How honorable ladies sought my love,
 Which I denying, they fell sick and died—
 I could not do withall^o Then I'll repent,
 And wish, for all that,^o that I had not killed them.
 And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
 75 That men shall swear I have discontinued school
 Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,^o
 Which I will practice.

Nerissa. Why, shall we turn to^o men?

Portia. Fie, what a question's that,
 80 If thou wert near a lewd^o interpreter!

56 convenient speed speed suited (to this emergency) 60 habit garment, i.e., men's clothes 61 accomplishèd provided 64 prettier more dashing 65 braver grace finer masculine grace 67 reed high or squeaky, like the sound of a reed pipe 69 quaint clever and elaborate 72 I could not do withal I could not help it 73 for all that in spite of that 77 Jacks fellows 78 turn to turn into (with an off-color pun; cf. I.iii.78) 80 lewd bad

But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles today. *Exeunt.*

[Scene V. Belmont. A garden.]

Enter [Launcelot the] Clown and Jessica.

Launcelot. Yes truly; for look you, the sins of the father
are to be laid upon the children.^o Therefore, I prom-
ise you I fear you.^o I was always plain with you, and
so now I speak my agitation^o of the matter. There-
fore be o' good cheer, for truly I think you are 5
damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you
any good, and that is but a kind of bastard hope
neither.

Jessica. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Launcelot. Marry, you may partly hope that your fa- 10
ther got you not—that you are not the Jew's daughter.

Jessica. That were a kind of bastard hope indeed! So^o
the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Launcelot. Truly then, I fear you are damned both by
father and mother. Thus when I shun Scylla your 15
father, I fall into Charybdis your mother. Well, you
are gone both ways.

Jessica. I shall be saved by my husband.^o He hath
made me a Christian.

Launcelot. Truly, the more to blame he! We were 20

III.v.1-2 sins . . . children (see Exodus 20:5) 3 fear you fear for
you 4 agitation (blunder for "cogitation") 12 So thus 18 saved
by my husband (see 1 Corinthians 7:14)

Christians enow^o before,^o e'en as many as could well live one by another.^o This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher^o on the coals for money.

25

Enter Lorenzo.

Jessica. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say. Here he comes.

Lorenzo. I shall grow jealous^o of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

30 *Jessica.* Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo. Launcelot and I are out.^o He tells me flatly there's no mercy for me in heaven because I am a Jew's daughter; and he says you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians you raise the price of pork.

35

Lorenzo. [To Launcelot] I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the Negro's belly. The Moor^o is with child by you, Launcelot!

40 *Launcelot.* It is much that the Moor should be more than reason; but if she be less than an honest^o woman, she is indeed more than I took her for.

Lorenzo. How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best grace^o of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

45

Launcelot. That is done, sir. They have all stomachs.

21 enow enough 21 before before you turned Christian 22 one by another one off another 24 rasher slice of bacon 28 jeallous jealous 31 out at odds 38 Moor (pronounced "more"; hence Launcelot quibbles on "much," "more," and "Moor") 41 honest chaste 44 grace virtue

Lorenzo. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you!
Then bid them prepare dinner. 50

Launcelot. That is done too, sir. Only "cover"° is the word.

Lorenzo. Will you cover then, sir?

Launcelot. Not so, sir, neither! I know my duty.

Lorenzo. Yet more quarreling with occasion!° Wilt 55
thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant?
I pray thee understand a plain man in his plain
meaning: go to thy fellows, bid them cover the table,
serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Launcelot. For the table,° sir, it shall be served in; for 60
the meat, sir, it shall be covered;° for your coming
in to dinner, sir, why let it be as humors and conceits° shall govern. *Exit Clown [Launcelot].*

Lorenzo. O dear discretion,° how his words are suited!° 65
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many° fools that stand in better place,
Garnished° like him, that for a tricky word
Defy the matter.° How cheer'st thou,° Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion— 70
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jessica. Past all expressing. It is very meet 75
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life,
For having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not merit it,

51 cover cover the table (Launcelot proceeds to quibble on "cover" in the sense of "wear a hat") 55 quarrelling with occasion caviling at every opportunity 60 table (1) the piece of furniture (2) the meal 61 covered i.e., to be kept hot 62-63 humors and conceits fancies and notions 64 dear discretion precious common sense 64 suited fitted together (?) dressed up (?) 67 A many (an old idiom for a large number) 68 Garnished decked out 69 the matter good sense 69 How cheer'st thou how is it with thee (the implication is that he kisses her)

In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
And on the wager lay^o two earthly women,
80 And Portia one, there must be something else^o
Pawned with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lorenzo. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jessica. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that!

85 *Lorenzo.* I will anon. First let us go to dinner.

Jessica. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.^o

Lorenzo. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then howsome'er^o thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jessica. Well, I'll set you forth.^o

Exit [with Lorenzo].

79 lay stake 80 something else i.e., to make the wager fair 86 stomach (a pun on "desire" [to praise you] and an "appetite" for dinner) 88 howsome'er however 89 I'll set you forth I'll give a fine account of you

[ACT IV

Scene I. *Venice. A court of justice.*]

Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, [Salerio,] and Gratiano [with others].

Duke. What,° is Antonio here?

Antonio. Ready, so please your Grace.

Duke. I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram° of mercy. 3

Antonio. I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify°
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate,
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach,° I do oppose 10
My patience to his fury, and am armed
To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The very tyranny and rage° of his.

Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

Salerio. He is ready at the door; he comes, my lord. 15

IV.i.1 What why (interjection) 6 dram mite, drop (literally an eighth of an ounce) 7 qualify moderate 10 his envy's reach the reach of his malignant hate 13 tyranny and rage savagery and passion

Enter Shylock.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our° face.
 Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
 That thou but leadest this fashion of thy malice
 To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
 20 Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse° more strange°
 Than is thy strange° apparent cruelty;
 And where thou now exacts the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
 Thou wilt not only loose° the forfeiture,
 25 But touched with human gentleness and love,
 Forgive a moiety° of the principal,
 Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
 That have of late so huddled on his back—
 Enow° to press a royal merchant° down
 30 And pluck commiseration of his state
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn Turks and Tartars never trained
 To offices of tender courtesy.
 We all expect° a gentle° answer, Jew.

Shylock. I have possessed° your Grace of what I
 35 purpose,
 And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
 To have the due and forfeit of my bond.
 If you deny it, let the danger light
 Upon your charter and your city's freedom!°
 40 You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
 A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
 Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that,
 But say it is my humor. Is it answered?
 What if my house be troubled with a rat,
 45 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats

16 our (the royal "we," appropriate in giving an order, but in the next line the Duke uses "I," the informal singular, suited for a personal appeal to Shylock's feelings) 20 remorse compassion 20 strange wonderful 21 strange astonishing 24 loose release 26 moiety portion 29 Enow enough 29 royal merchant merchant prince 34 expect await 34 gentle befitting a gentleman 35 possessed informed 38-39 danger . . . freedom (cf. III.iii.27-31)

To have it baned?° What, are you answered yet?
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig,°
 Some that are mad if they behold a cat,
 And others, when the bagpipe sings i' th' nose,
 Cannot contain their urine; for affection,° 50
 Master of passion,° sways it to the mood
 Of what it likes or loathes. Now for your answer:
 As there is no firm reason to be rend' red
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig,
 Why he a harmless necessary cat, 55
 Why he° a woollen bagpipe, but of force°
 Must yield to such inevitable shame°
 As to offend, himself being offended;
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
 More than a lodged° hate and a certain° loathing 60
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
 A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

Bassanio. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
 To excuse the current of thy cruelty!

Shylock. I am not bound° to please thee with my
 answers. 65

Bassanio. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shylock. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

Bassanio. Every offense is not a hate at first.

Shylock. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee
 twice?

Antonio. I pray you think you question° with the Jew. 70
 You may as well go stand upon the beach

46 baned poisoned 47 gaping pig young roast pig, often served with fruit in its open mouth (Shylock invokes the old theory of natural antipathy to explain his hatred of Antonio, thus concealing the real cause; cf. I.iii. 39-42) 50 affection natural sympathy or antipathy 51 passion powerful emotion 54-56 he . . . he . . . he (pronounced with heavy emphasis; this man . . . that man . . . another) 56 of force of necessity, against his will 57 shame (as in line 50, above) 60 lodged fixed 60 certain assured, steadfast 65 bound bound by law 70 think you question remember you argue

And bid the main flood bate his^o usual height;
 You may as well use question with the wolf,
 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
 75 You may as well forbid the mountain pines
 To wag their high tops and to make no noise
 When they are fretten^o with the gusts of heaven;
 You may as well do anything most hard
 As seek to soften that—than which what's harder?—
 80 His Jewish heart. Therefore I do beseech you
 Make no more offers, use no farther means,
 But with all brief and plain conveniency^o
 Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

Bassanio. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

85 *Shylock.* If every ducat in six thousand ducats
 Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
 I would not draw^o them. I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?

Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
 90 You have among you many a purchased slave,
 Which like your asses and your dogs and mules
 You use in abject and in slavish parts,^o
 Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
 "Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs!
 95 Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds
 Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
 Be seasoned with such viands"? You will answer,
 "The slaves are ours." So do I answer you:
 The pound of flesh which I demand of him
 100 Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it.
 If you deny me, fie upon your law!
 There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
 I stand for judgment. Answer; shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court
 105 Unless Bellario, a learned doctor

72 main flood bate his ocean at high tide reduce its 77 fretten
 fretted 82 brief and plain conveniency suitable brevity and direct-
 ness 87 draw take 92 parts duties

Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here today.

Salerio. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters. Call the messenger. 110

Bassanio. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!

The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Antonio. I am a tainted wether^o of the flock,
Meetest^o for death. The weakest kind of fruit 115
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

Enter Nerissa [dressed like a Lawyer's Clerk].

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Nerissa. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your
Grace. [Presents a letter.] 120

Bassanio. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shylock. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrout there.

Gratiano. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can—
No, not the hangman's^o ax—bear^o half the keenness 125
Of thy sharp envy.^o Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shylock. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Gratiano. O be thou damned, inexecrable^o dog,
And for thy life let justice be accused!^o
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith, 130

114 tainted wether infected ram 115 Meetest fittest 125 hang-
man's executioner's 125 bear have 126 envy malignant hate
128 inexecrable most execrable, detestable 129 And . . . accused
(a much debated line. Probably, "Let justice be accused because
you have been allowed to live so long")

To hold opinion with Pythagoras°
 That souls of animals infuse themselves
 Into the trunks of men. Thy curriish spirit
 Governed a wolf who, hanged for human slaughter,°
 135 Even from the gallows did his fell° soul fleet,
 And whilst thou layest in thy unhallowed dam,°
 Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
 Are wolvisish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

Shylock. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
 140 Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.
 Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
 To cureless ruin.° I stand here for law.

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
 A young and learned doctor to our court.
 Where is he?

145 *Nerissa.* He attendeth here hard by
 To know your answer whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
 Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
 Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

150 [*Clerk. (Reads)*] "Your Grace shall understand that at
 the receipt of your letter I am very sick; but in the
 instant that your messenger came, in loving visita-
 tion was with me a young doctor of Rome. His name
 is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in
 155 controversy between the Jew and Antonio the
 merchant. We turned o'er many books together.
 He is furnished with my opinion which, bettered
 with his own learning, the greatness whereof I can-
 not enough commend, comes with him at my impor-
 160 tunity to fill up° your Grace's request in my stead.

131 Pythagoras Greek philosopher of the 6th century B.C. who taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls 134 hanged for human slaughter (wolves, dogs, and other animals were sometimes hanged for killing or attacking people; hence the phrase "hangdog look") 135 fell fierce 136 dam mother of an animal, here a she-wolf 141-42 fall/To cureless ruin i.e., like a house too long out of repair 160 fill up satisfy

I beseech you let his lack of years be no impediment to let^o him lack a reverend estimation, for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial^o shall better publish his commendation."

165

Enter Portia for Balthasar, [dressed like a Doctor of Laws].

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes; And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Portia. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome; take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference^o

That holds this present question^o in the court?

170

Portia. I am informèd throughly^o of the cause.^o

Which is the merchant here? And which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Portia. Is your name Shylock?

Shylock.

Shylock is my name.

175

Portia. Of a strange^o nature is the suit you follow,

Yet in such rule that^o the Venetian law

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

[*To Antonio*] You stand within his danger,^o do you not?

Antonio. Ay, so he says.

Portia.

Do you confess the bond?

180

Antonio. I do.

Portia.

Then must the Jew be merciful.

162 to let to cause 164 trial conduct when brought to the test
170 difference dispute 171 question case under judicial examination
172 throughly thoroughly 172 cause case 176 strange astonishing
177 in such rule that within the rule so that 179 danger
power to harm

Shylock. On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

Portia. The quality of mercy is not strained;^o
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 185 Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
 The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
 His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
 190 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this scept'red sway;
 It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself,
 195 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
 That, in the course of justice, none of us
 Should see salvation.^o We do pray for mercy,
 200 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
 To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
 Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
 Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

205 *Shylock.* My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
 The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Portia. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bassanio. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court,
 Yea, twice^o the sum. If that will not suffice,
 210 I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er
 On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.

183 *strained* constrained, compelled 198-99 *That . . . salvation* (referring to the doctrine that God can justly condemn every man, since none is free of sin) 209 *twice* (in lines 226 and 233 "thrice" the money has been offered, and editors therefore commonly emend "twice" to "thrice," on the assumption that here the compositor misread the manuscript. But in line 84 the offered amount is indeed double—six thousand ducats for three thousand—and therefore emendation to "thrice" still leaves an inconsistency, unless the point is that as Bassanio's fears for Antonio grow, he raises the offer)

If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority.^o
To do a great right, do a little wrong, 215
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Portia. It must not be. There is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree establishèd.
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example 220
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.

Shylock. A Daniel come to judgment!^o Yea, a Daniell
O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!

Portia. I pray you let me look upon the bond.

Shylock. Here 'tis, most reverend Doctor, here it is. 225

Portia. Shylock, there's thrice thy money off'red thee.

Shylock. An oath, an oath! I have an oath in heaven;
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice!

Portia. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim 230
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful.
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

Shylock. When it is paid, according to the tenure.^o
It doth appear you are a worthy judge; 235
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man 240
To alter me. I stay^o here on my bond.

214 *Wrest* . . . *authority* for once twist the law a little and subject
it to your authority 222 A *Daniel* come to judgment the young
biblical hero who secured justice for Susannah (See Apocrypha,
Susannah; 42-64) 234 *tenure* conditions 241 *stay* take my stand

Antonio. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

Portia. Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife—

245 *Shylock.* O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Portia. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to^o the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shylock. 'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge!
250 How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

Portia. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

Shylock. Ay, his breast—
So says the bond, doth it not, noble judge?
"Nearest his heart"; those are the very words.

Portia. It is so. Are there balance^o here to weigh
The flesh?

255 *Shylock.* I have them ready.

Portia. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your
charge,^o
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shylock. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Portia. It is not so expressed, but what of that?
260 'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shylock. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

Portia. You, merchant, have you anything to say?

Antonio. But little. I am armed and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well.
265 Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you,
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use^o

247 Hath full relation to is related inseparably to 254 balance
(plural) scales 256 on your charge at your expense 267 still her
use ever her custom

To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
 To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
 An age of poverty; from which ling'ring penance 270
 Of such misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honorable wife.
 Tell her the process° of Antonio's end,
 Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
 And when the tale is told, bid her be judge 273
 Whether Bassanio had not once a love.°

Repent but you° that you shall lose your friend,
 And he repents not° that he pays your debt;
 For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
 I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.° 280

Bassanio. Antonio, I am married to a wife
 Which is as dear to me as life itself;
 But life itself, my wife, and all the world
 Are not with me esteemed above thy life.
 I would lose all, ay sacrifice them all 283
 Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Portia. Your wife would give you little thanks for that
 If she were by to hear you make the offer.

Gratiano. I have a wife who I protest I love.
 I would she were in heaven, so she could 290
 Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Nerissa. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
 The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shylock. These be the Christian husbands! I have a
 daughter;
 Would any of the stock of Barabbas° 293
 Had been her husband, rather than a Christian!
 We trifle time. I pray thee pursue sentence.

273 process whole story 276 love friend (with a quibble on "love,"
 in the sense of "lover") 277 Repent but you if you but feel sorrow
 278 And he repents not then he regrets not 280 with all my heart
 (a quibble on "heart" in the senses of soul and of the physical
 organ) 295 Barabbas (1) the thief freed by Pilate when the people
 demanded that Christ be crucified (2) the name of the villainous
 hero in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*

Portia. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine.
The court awards it, and the law doth give it—

300 *Shylock.* Most rightful judge!

Portia. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast.
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shylock. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

Portia. Tarry a little; there is something else.

305 This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are "a pound of flesh."
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
310 Are by the laws of Venice confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gratiano. O upright judge! Mark, Jew. O learned judge!

Shylock. Is that the law?

Portia. Thyself shalt see the act;
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured

315 Thou shalt have justice more than thou desir'st.

Gratiano. O learned judge! Mark, Jew. A learned judge!

Shylock. I take this offer then. Pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

Bassanio. Here is the money.

Portia. Soft!

320 The Jew shall have all justice. Soft, no haste;
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gratiano. O Jew! An upright judge, a learned judge!

Portia. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

325 But just a pound of flesh. If thou tak'st more

Or less than a just^o pound, be it but so much
 As makes it light or heavy in the substance^o
 Or the division^o of the twentieth part
 Of one poor scruple^o—nay, if the scale do turn
 But in the estimation^o of a hair—
 Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

330

Gratiano. A second Daniel! A Daniel, Jew!
 Now, infidel, I have you on the hip!

Portia. Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

Shylock. Give me my principal, and let me go.

333

Bassanio. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Portia. He hath refused it in the open court.
 He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gratiano. A Daniel still say I, a second Daniel!
 I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

340

Shylock. Shall I not have barely my principal?

Portia. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
 To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shylock. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
 I'll stay no longer question.^o

Portia. Tarry, Jew!

345

The law hath yet another hold on you.
 It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
 If it be proved against an alien
 That by direct or indirect attempts
 He seek the life of any citizen,
 The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
 Shall seize^o one half his goods; the other half
 Comes to the privy coffer^o of the state;
 And the offender's life lies in the mercy
 Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.

350

355

326 just exact 327 substance amount 328 division portion
 328-29 twentieth . . . scruple i.e., one grain 330 estimation value
 345 stay no longer question remain for no more talk 352 seize
 take possession of 353 privy coffer equivalent to the British Privy
 Purse, money provided for the monarch's own use

In which predicament^o I say thou stand'st,
 For it appears by manifest proceeding
 That indirectly, and directly too,
 Thou hast contrived against the very life
 360 Of the defendant, and thou hast incurred
 The danger formerly by me rehearsed.^o
 Down therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

Gratiano. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang
 thyself!

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
 363 Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
 Therefore thou must be hanged at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
 I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
 For^o half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
 370 The other half comes to the general state,
 Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.^o

Portia. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

Shylock. Nay, take my life and all! Pardon not that!
 You take my house, when you do take the prop
 375 That doth sustain my house. You take my life
 When you do take the means whereby I live.

Portia. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gratiano. A halter gratis! Nothing else, for God's sake!

Antonio. So please my lord the Duke and all the court
 380 To quit^o the fine for one half of his goods,
 I am content; so^o he will let me have
 The other half in use,^o to render it
 Upon his death unto the gentleman
 That lately stole his daughter.

Two things provided more: that for this favor
 385 He presently^o become a Christian;
 The other, that he do record a gift

356 predicament situation 361 rehearsed cited 369 For as for
 371 may drive unto a fine may persuade me to reduce to a fine 380
 quit remit 381 so provided 382 in use in trust, to use in his
 business 386 presently instantly

Here in the court of all he dies possessed
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant°
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

390

Portia. Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

Shylock. I am content.

Portia. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shylock. I pray you give me leave to go from hence.
I am not well. Send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

395

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gratiano. In christ'ning shalt thou have two godfathers.
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten
more°—

To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font.

Exit [Shylock].

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

400

Portia. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon.
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.°
Antonio, gratify° this gentleman,
For in my mind you are much bound to him.

405

Exit Duke and his Train.

Bassanio. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties, in lieu whereof,°
Three thousand ducats due unto the Jew
We freely cope° your courteous pains withal.

410

390 recant retract 398 ten more i.e., to make a jury of twelve
404 serves you not is not sufficient for you 405 gratify show your
gratitude to 409 in lieu whereof in return for 411 We freely
cope of our own free will we requite

Antonio. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

415 *Portia.* He is well paid that is well satisfied,
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid;
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you know me when we meet again.
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

420 *Bassanio.* Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further.
Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,
Not as fee. Grant me two things, I pray you—
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Portia. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
425 Give me your gloves; I'll wear them for your sake.
[*Bassanio takes off his gloves.*]
And for your love I'll take this ring from you.
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more,
And you in love^o shall not deny me this.

Bassanio. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
430 I will not shame myself to give you this.

Portia. I will have nothing else but only this,
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bassanio. There's more depends on this than on the
value.^o

435 The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation.
Only for this, I pray you pardon me.^o

Portia. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers.
You taught me first to beg, and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answered.

440 *Bassanio.* Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife,
And when she put it on she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

428 in love in your good will to me 433 the value the ring's value
436 Only . . . pardon me only as for this ring, I beg you to excuse
me

Portia. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
And if your wife be not a madwoman,
And know how well I have deserved this ring,
She would not hold out enemy forever
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

443

Exeunt [Portia and Nerissa].

Antonio. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.
Let his deservings, and my love withal,
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandement.°

450

Bassanio. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him if thou canst
Unto Antonio's house. Away, make haste!

Exit Gratiano.

Come, you and I will thither presently,
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio.

455

Exeunt.

[Scene II. Venice. A street.]

Enter [Portia and] Nerissa, [disguised as before].

Portia. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed,°
And let him sign it. We'll away tonight
And be a day before our husbands home.
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter Gratiano.

Gratiano. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en.
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice°
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

3

Portia. That cannot be.

450 commandement (four syllables) IV.ii.1 this deed the deed of
gift for Lorenzo and Jessica 6 upon more advce on further con-
sideration

10 His ring I do accept most thankfully,
And so I pray you tell him. Furthermore,
I pray you show my youth old Shylock's house.

Gratiano. That will I do.

Nerissa. Sir, I would speak with you.
[*Aside to Portia*] I'll see if I can get my husband's
ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep forever.

13 *Portia.* [*Aside to Nerissa*] Thou mayst, I warrant. We
shall have old swearing^o
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
Away, make haste! Thou know'st where I will tarry.

Nerissa. Come, good sir, will you show me to this
house? [Exeunt.]

15 old swearing a lot of hard swearing

[ACT V

Scene I. *Belmont. A garden before Portia's house.*]

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica.

Lorenzo. The moon shines bright. In such a night as
this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus^o methinks mounted the Trojan walls,
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents
Where Cressid^o lay that night.

Jessica. In such a night
Did Thisbe^o fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismayed away.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Stood Dido^o with a willow^o in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft^o her love
To come again to Carthage.

V.i.1-23 (the lovers' playful contest in verse-making belongs to a type of poetic dialogue as old as Virgil's *Eclogues*) 4 *Troilus* hero of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida* and of Shakespeare's play of the same title; a type of the faithful lover 6 *Cressid* *Cressida*, a type of the faithless woman 7 *Thisbe* heroine of the tragic tale of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 10 *Dido* Queen of Carthage whom Aeneas loved but abandoned at the call of duty 10 *willow* proverbially associated with forsaken love 11 *waft* waved (with the willow branch)

Jessica. In such a night
Medea° gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Aeson.°

Lorenzo. In such a night
15 Did Jessica steal° from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love° did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

Jessica. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

20 *Lorenzo.* In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrow,°
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jessica. I would out-night you, did nobody come;
But hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter [Stephano,] a Messenger.

25 *Lorenzo.* Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
Messenger. A friend.

Lorenzo. A friend? What friend? Your name I pray
you, friend.

Messenger. Stephano is my name, and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
30 Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about
By holy crosses° where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

Lorenzo. Who comes with her?

Messenger. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet returned?

13 Medea princess and sorceress who helped Jason to obtain the Golden Fleece, and later was deserted by him, 14 Aeson father of Jason, restored to youth by Medea 15 steal (a pun) steal money, steal away 16 unthrift love (a pun) a love which disregards wealth, and a lover without wealth 21 shrow shrew 31 holy crosses (a common sight in Renaissance Italy; used to mark shrines on hill-tops, beside roads, etc.)

Lorenzo. He is not, nor we have not heard from him. 35
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter [Launcelot, the] Clown.

Launcelot. Sola,° sola! Wo ha! Ho sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Who calls? 40

Launcelot. Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo and
Mistress Lorenzo? sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Leave holloaing, man! Here.

Launcelot. Sola! Where? Where?

Lorenzo. Here! 45

Launcelot. Tell him there's a post come from my
master, with his horn full of good news.° My master
will be here ere morning. [Exit.]

Lorenzo. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect° their
coming.

And yet no matter; why should we go in? 50

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand,
And bring your music forth into the air.

[Exit Stephano.]

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank! 55

Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become° the touches° of sweet harmony.

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven

Is thick inlaid with patens° of bright gold.

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st 60

But in his motion like an angel sings,

39 Sola (Launcelot imitates a courier's horn) 47 horn full of
good news (Launcelot puns on the cornucopia, "the horn of plenty")
49 expect await 57 Become befit 57, 67 touches notes produced
by touching the strings or stops of a musical instrument 59 patens
tiles

Still quiring° to the young-eyed cherubins;
 Such harmony is in immortal souls,
 But whilst this muddy vesture of decay°
 65 Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

[Enter Musicians.]

Come ho, and wake Diana° with a hymn!
 With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
 And draw her home with music. *Play music.*

Jessica. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

70 Lorenzo. The reason is, your spirits are attentive.
 For do but note a wild and wanton° herd
 Or race of youthful and unhandled colts
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
 Which is the hot condition° of their blood:
 75 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
 Or any air of music touch their ears,
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,°
 Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
 By the sweet power of music. Therefore the poet
 Did feign that Orpheus° drew trees, stones, and
 80 floods;
 Since naught so stockish,° hard, and full of rage°
 But music for the time doth change his nature.
 The man that hath no music in himself,
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
 85 Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;°
 The motions° of his spirit are dull as night,
 And his affections° dark as Erebus.°
 Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

62 *quiring* making music (a reference to the music of the spheres. It was thought that the harmonious movement of the spheres, in Ptolemaic astronomy, produced a heavenly music inaudible to human ears) 64 *muddy vesture of decay* earthy garment subject to decay, i.e., the body 66 *Diana* goddess of the moon and of chastity 71 *wanton* frolicsome, untrained 74 *hot condition* impetuous nature 77 *make a mutual stand* stand still by common consent 80 *Orpheus* famous legendary Greek poet and musician 81 *stockish* blockish, dull 81 *rage* passion 85 *spoils* plundering 86 *motions* inward promptings 87 *affections* emotions 87 *Erebus* the dark underworld of the Greeks

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

Portia. That light we see is burning in my hall;
 How far that little candle throws his beams!
 So shines a good deed in a naughty^o world. 90

Nerissa. When the moon shone we did not see the candle.

Portia. So doth the greater glory dim the less.
 A substitute^o shines brightly as a king
 Until a king be by, and then his state 95
 Empties itself,^o as doth an inland brook
 Into the main of waters.^o Music, hark!

Nerissa. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Portia. Nothing is good, I see, without respect;^o
 Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day. 100

Nerissa. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Portia. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
 When neither is attended;^o and I think
 The nightingale, if she should sing by day
 When every goose is cackling, would be thought 105
 No better a musician than the wren.
 How many things by season, seasoned are
 To their right praise and true perfection!^o
 Peace! [*Music ceases.*] How the^o moon sleeps with
 Endymion,^o
 And would not be awaked.^o

Lorenzo. That is the voice, 110
 Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

91 naughty evil 94 substitute deputy 95-96 his state/Empties itself i.e., his own glory merges into the king's 97 main of waters ocean 99 without respect without reference to circumstances 103 attended heeded 107-08 by season . . . perfection by the right occasion are made ready to receive their fitting praise and attain their full perfection 109 Peace! How the (the quarto reads "Peace, how the"; editors often emend to "Peace, ho! The") 109 Endymion a handsome shepherd, beloved of Diana 109-10 Peace . . . awaked addressed to the musicians

Portia. He knows me as the blind man knows the
cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

Lorenzo. Dear lady, welcome home.

Portia. We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
115 Which speed we hope the better for our words.
Are they returned?

Lorenzo. Madam, they are not yet,
But there is come a messenger before
To signify their coming.

Portia. Go in, Nerissa.
Give order to my servants that they take
120 No note at all of our being absent hence—
Nor you, Lorenzo—Jessica, nor you.
[*A tucket*° sounds.]

Lorenzo. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet.
We are no telltales, madam; fear you not.

Portia. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
125 It looks a little paler. 'Tis a day
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their Followers.

Bassanio. We should hold day with the Antipodes,°
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

Portia. Let me give light,° but let me not be light,
130 For a light wife doth make a heavy° husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me.
But God sort all!° You are welcome home, my lord.

Bassanio. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my
friend.

121 s.d. *tucket* trumpet call (Bassanio, like every nobleman, had his individual *tucket*) 127 *Antipodes* dwellers on the opposite side of the earth 129, 130 *light*, *heavy* (Portia quibbles on "light" in the senses of radiance, unchaste, and of little weight, and on "heavy" in the senses of weighty and despondent, weighed down with trouble) 132 *God sort all* let God ordain all according to his wisdom

This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

133

Portia. You should in all sense^o be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Antonio. No more than I am well acquitted of.^o

Portia. Sir, you are very welcome to our house.
It must appear in other ways than words;
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.^o

140

Gratiano. [To *Nerissa*] By yonder moon I swear you do
me wrong!

In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.
Would he were gelt^o that had it, for my part,^o
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

143

Portia. A quarrel, ho, already! What's the matter?

Gratiano. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy^o was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love me, and leave me not."

150

Nerissa. What^o talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me when I did give it you
That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me,^o yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective^o and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it!

155

Gratiano. He will, and if he live to be a man.

Nerissa. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

160

Gratiano. Now by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbèd^o boy

136 in all sense (1) in all reason (2) in all senses 138 acquitted of
freed from 141 breathing courtesy courtesy that is only breath,
i.e., words 144 gelt castrated 144 for my part so far as I care
148 posy (a contraction of "poesy," i.e., "poetry") motto (inscribed
on a ring) 151 What why 155 Though not for me if not for my
sake 156 respective regardful, heedful 162 scrubbèd stunted

No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy that begged it as a fee.

165 I could not for my heart deny it him.

Portia. You were to blame—I must be plain with you—
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift,
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger,
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.

170 I gave my love a ring, and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands.
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it^o
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters.^o Now in faith, Gratiano,
175 You give your wife too unkind^o a cause of grief.
And, 'twere to me, I should be mad^o at it.

Bassanio. [*Aside*]. Why, I were best to cut my left hand
off

And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Gratiano. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
180 Unto the judge that begged it, and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk
That took some pains in writing, he begged mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Portia. What ring gave you, my lord?
185 Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

Bassanio. If I could add a lie unto a fault,^o
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it—it is gone.

Portia. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
190 By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring!

Nerissa. Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine!

172 leave it let it go 174 masters possesses 175 unkind unnatur-
ally cruel 176 mad in a frenzy 186 fault faulty act
CC-0 Kashmir Research Institute. Digitized by eGangotri

Bassanio. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what^o I gave the ring, 195
And how unwillingly I left the ring
When naught would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Portia. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, 200
Or your own honor to contain^o the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal,^o wanted the modesty 205
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?^o
Nerissa teaches me what to believe;
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring!

Bassanio. No, by my honor, madam! By my soul
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,^o 210
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begged the ring, the which I did deny him,
And suffered him to go displeased away,
Even he that had held up the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? 215
I was enforced to send it after him.
I was beset with shame and courtesy.^o
My honor would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady!
For by these blessed candles of the night, 220
Had you been there, I think you would have begged
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Portia. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.

195 conceive for what form a conception of why 201 honor to contain honorable duty to retain 205 terms of zeal ardent language 205-06 wanted . . . ceremony would have been so lacking in modesty as to urge a claim on the thing you were keeping as a hallowed symbol 210 civil doctor doctor of civil law 217 beset with shame and courtesy assailed by feelings of shame and the obligations of courtesy

Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
 225 And that which you did swear to keep for me,
 I will become as liberal^o as you;
 I'll not deny him anything I have,
 No, not my body nor my husband's bed.
 Know him I shall, I am well sure of it.
 230 Lie not a night from home. Watch me like Argus.^o
 If you do not, if I be left alone—
 Now by mine honor which is yet mine own,
 I'll have that doctor for mine bedfellow.

Nerissa. And I his clerk. Therefore be well advised^o
 235 How you do leave me to mine own protection.

Gratiano. Well, do you so. Let not me take^o him then!
 For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.^o

Antonio. I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Portia. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome not with-
 standing.

240 *Bassanio.* Portia, forgive me this enforcèd wrong,^o
 And in the hearing of these many friends
 I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
 Wherein I see myself—

Portia. Mark you but that!
 In both my eyes he doubly sees himself,
 245 In each eye one. Swear by your double self,^o
 And there's an oath of credit.^o

Bassanio. Nay, but hear me.
 Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
 I never more will break an oath with thee.

Antonio. I once did lend my body for his wealth,^o
 250 Which but for him that had your husband's ring

226 *liberal* (1) licentious (2) generous 230 *Argus* a monstrous giant of Greek myth, with a hundred eyes; a type of never-failing watchfulness 234 *be well advised* be very careful 236 *take* get hold of 237 *pen* (double entendre) 240 *this enforcèd wrong* this wrong I was forced to commit 245 *double self* a quibble (1) twofold image (2) double-dealing character 246 *oath of credit* oath to be believed (spoken in irony) 249 *wealth* welfare

Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.°

Portia. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other. 255

Antonio. Here, Lord Bassanio. Swear to keep this ring.

Bassanio. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

Portia. I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio,
For by this ring the doctor lay with me.

Nerissa. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano,
For that same scrubbèd boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of° this, last night did lie with me. 260

Gratiano. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair enough.
What, are we cuckolds° ere we have deserved it? 265

Portia. Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed.°
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure.
It comes from Padua from Bellario.
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here 270
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now returned. I have not yet
Entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome,
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon; 275
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbor suddenly.
You shall not know by what strange° accident
I chancèd on this letter.

Antonio. I am dumb!

Bassanio. Were you the doctor, and I knew you not? 280

253 advisedly deliberately 262 In lieu of in return for 265 cuck-
olds husbands of faithless wives 266 amazed utterly bewildered;
literally, entangled in a maze or labyrinth 278 strange astonishing

Gratiano. Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

Nerissa. Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,
Unless he live until he be a man.

Bassanio. Sweet Doctor, you shall be my bedfellow.
285 When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

Antonio. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living!
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.°

Portia. How now, Lorenzo?
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

290 *Nerissa.* Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possessed of.

Lorenzo. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starvèd people.°

295 *Portia.* It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full.° Let us go in,
And charge us there upon° inter'gatories,°
And we will answer all things faithfully.

300 *Gratiano.* Let it be so. The first inter'gatory
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on° is,
Whether till the next night she had rather stay,
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day.
But were the day come, I should wish it dark
305 Till I were couching with the doctor's clerk.
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. *Exeunt.*

FINIS

288 road anchorage 295 starvèd people (Lorenzo, though of good social position, was, like Bassanio, far from rich) 296-97 not satisfied . . . full not fully satisfied how these events came to pass 298 charge us there upon load us with questions 298 inter'gatories interrogatories, i.e., questions formally drawn up to be put to a defendant or witness and answered under oath 301 sworn on sworn to Oanda Research Institute. Digitized by eGangotri

Textual Note

The exact date of the play's composition is uncertain, but the play was in existence in 1598, when Francis Meres mentioned it in *Palladis Tamia*, and it may have been written as early as 1596, if the reference to the ship *Andrew* in I.i.27 is indebted—as has been conjectured—to news of the capture of the Spanish ship *St. Andrew* in the Cádiz expedition. In 1598 and in 1600 the play was entered in the Stationers' Register. It was first published in a quarto (Q1) in 1600. The interesting part of the title page runs thus: "The most excellent/ Historie of the Merchant/ of Venice./ With the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Iewe/ towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a iust pound/ of his flesh: and the obtayning of Portia/ by the choyse of three/ chests./ As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord/ Chamberlaine his Seruants./ Written by William Shakespeare." The absence of some necessary stage directions (e.g., entrances of some characters who later speak) suggests that the copy for this quarto could not have been a promptbook. Conversely, there are some bits of evidence that suggest the copy was very close to Shakespeare's manuscript; for example, such a stage direction as "Enter Portia for Balthazar" seems to reflect an author's conception of his action. But plays that are commonly thought to be printed from Shakespeare's manuscript usually have some confusions in them, the result of a somewhat illegible manuscript, and *The Merchant* lacks such confusions. Probably,

then, the printer's copy for the first quarto was a scribe's careful and clean copy of the manuscript—but, of course, it is unwise to be dogmatic about such matters.

In 1619 a second quarto (Q2) appeared, falsely dated 1600. Q2 was based on Q1, and though it corrects some palpable errors in Q1, Q2 has no independent authority. In 1623 the play was again reprinted, in the First Folio, again from Q1. And again, of course, there are some slight departures from Q1, ranging from misprints to the addition of some interesting stage directions that doubtless reflect playhouse practice. The most notable are directions calling for the flourishing of cornets.

Q1, then, the only authoritative text, and the source of all others, serves as the basis for the present edition, but some changes have been made. Solanio, Salarino, and Salerio have, as in most modern editions, been reduced to Solanio and Salerio. (Possibly Shakespeare began with three such characters in mind, but as he worked he apparently found he could make do with two, and Salarino disappeared. The name Salarino—which in Q1 occurs in stage directions at I.i; II.iv, vi, viii; III.i—in this edition is replaced by Salerio. Salarino is a diminutive of Salerio, and it is possible that Shakespeare did not intend them to be distinct. In any case, the name Salerio must stay, because it appears in the dialogue as well as in the stage directions.) Spelling and punctuation have been modernized, and speech prefixes have been regularized (e.g., we give "Shylock," though Q1 varies between "Shylock," "Shy.," and "Iew"). Act divisions, first introduced in the Folio, are given, and for ease of reference, the scene divisions established by the Globe edition are given. These additions, like necessary stage directions that are not found in Q1, are enclosed in square brackets. A superfluous stage direction ("*Enter Tubal,*" at III.i.74) has been deleted, the positions of a few stage directions are slightly altered, and obvious typographical errors have been corrected. Other departures from Q1 are listed below, the adopted reading given first, in *italic* type, the rejected reading in roman type. If the adopted reading comes from Q2 or F, that fact is indicated.

I.i.27 *docked docks* 113 *Is It is*

I.ii.59 *throstle* Trassell

II.i.s.d. *Morocco* Morochus 35 *page rage*

II.ii.99 *last* [Q2] *lost*

II.vii.69 *tombs* timber

II.viii.39 *Slubber* [Q2, F] *slumber*

III.i.100 *Heard* heere

III.ii.67 *eyes* [F] *eye* 81 *vice voyce*

III.iii.s.d. *Solanio* Salerio

III.iv.49 *Padua* Mantua 50 *cousin's* [Q2, F] *cosin* 81 *my* [Q2, F] *my my*

III.v.21 *e'en* [Q2, F] *in* 27 *comes. come?* 77 *merit it meane it, it* 84 *a wife* [F] *wife*

IV.i.30 *his state* [Q2, F] *this states* 31 *flint* [Q2] *flints* 51 *Master* Maisters 74 *bleat* [F] *bleake* 75 *mountain* [F] *mountaine of* 100 *is mine as mine* 229 *No, not* [Q2] *Not not* 396 *Gratiano* [Q2, F] *Shy* [lock]

V.i.41-42 *Master Lorenzo and Mistress Lorenzo?* M. Lorenzo, & M. Lorenzo 49 *Sweet soul* [concludes Launcelot's speech] 51 *Stephano* [Q2] *Stephen* 87 *Erebus* [F] *Terebus* 152 *it you* [Q2, F] *you*

A NOTE ON THE SOURCES OF

The Merchant of Venice

Some of Shakespeare's plays are close to their sources, and it is useful and often illuminating to see how he departs from Plutarch or Holinshed, Greene or Lodge. But no known work can be the only source for *The Merchant of Venice*. Apparently Shakespeare combined a number of sources, all of which repay careful study.

If he drew chiefly on a single source, it may have been a play called *The Jew*, which Stephen Gosson mentioned favorably in 1579, in his *School of Abuse*, and which he said showed "the greediness of worldly choosers" and the "bloody minds of usurers." Some scholars believe that the term "worldly choosers" shows that the casket story (in which worldly-minded suitors are discomfited by choosing the gold or silver casket) has been combined with the story of the usurer and the pound of flesh. Yet the word "greediness" seems less appropriate to suitors than to usurers. In any case, *The Jew* is not extant, and speculation about Shakespeare's debt to it is idle.

Of extant works, *Il Pecorone* (The Dunce), an Italian collection of prose tales by an author who calls himself Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, is the most relevant. The first tale of the fourth day concerns the Lady of Belmonte, a widow who demands that each traveler seek to possess her; if he does, she will wed him, but if he fails, all his goods are forfeit. Giannetto voyages to Belmonte twice; twice he is drugged and therefore fails and loses his goods. His godfather then borrows from a Jewish usurer and furnishes him for a third voyage. (Giannetto has lied, telling his god-

father that the goods were lost in shipwrecks.) This time Giannetto—warned by the Lady's maid—is successful. There follows the usurer's demand for the overdue money, the cleverness of the lawyer, the Lady in disguise (as in Shakespeare), and the business of the ring.

There is no indubitable proof that Shakespeare borrowed directly from *Il Pecorone*. He could have found the tale of the pound of flesh in other works, such as Alexander Silvaney's *The Orator* and Anthony Munday's *Zeluato*. It seems more than possible, however, that Shakespeare read *Il Pecorone* either in a translation or in Italian—a language which, with his good knowledge of Latin, he might very easily have acquired.

If he read it in one language or another, probably his most notable changes are the alteration of the indecent test imposed on the wooer, the addition of the usurer's daughter, and the omission of the wooer's incredibly long forgetfulness of his benefactor's danger, together with the ennoblement of all the leading characters.

The story of the caskets comes ultimately from Oriental folklore. Shakespeare's immediate source is believed to be an English version of the *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection of medieval Latin tales, translated into English in 1577 and "bettered" by the same translator in 1595. Possibly the author of the old play *The Jew* is responsible for joining the casket plot to the bond plot, but we know little about that play; Shakespeare may have been the first to combine the two stories.

Finally, it should be mentioned that Shakespeare's play about Christians and a Jew must owe something to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, and also to the trial, in 1594, of Dr. Roderigo Lopez, the converted Portuguese Jew who, though very probably innocent, was convicted and executed on the charge of plotting to poison Queen Elizabeth I. In *The Jew of Malta*, Shakespeare would have found a Jew who is a scoundrel but is, at certain moments, a really human figure wronged by the Christians around him. Shylock's daughter Jessica may owe something to Marlowe's Abigail, who loves a Christian, but both Abigail and her beloved are killed, whereas Jessica escapes into a happy marriage

with Lorenzo. In the Lopez trial, Shakespeare would have found the usual depiction of the murderous Jew.

Geoffrey Bullough, in the first volume of his *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, has brought together selections from Silvayne's *The Orator*, Anthony Munday's *Zelauto*, and *Il Pecorone*. To anyone who browses through this material, it is clear enough that Shakespeare did not invent the chief episodes of his play. It is no less clear that the remarkable characterizations, the moral tone, the poetry, and probably the deft interweaving of the various strands of the plot are the work of a great dramatic poet.

Commentaries

NICHOLAS ROWE

from *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*

In *Twelfth Night* there is something singularly ridiculous and pleasant in the fantastical steward Malvolio. . . . Petruchio, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, is an uncommon piece of humor. . . . To these I might add that incomparable character of Shylock the Jew, in *The Merchant of Venice*; but though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy, and the part of the Jew performed by an excellent comedian, yet I cannot but think it was designed tragically by the author. There appears in it such a deadly spirit of revenge, such a savage fierceness and fellness, and such a bloody designation of cruelty and mischief, as cannot agree either with the style or characters of comedy. The play itself, take it all together, seems to me to be one of the most finished of any of Shakespear's. The tale, indeed, in that part relating to the caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of bond given by Antonio, is a little too much removed from the rules of probability: but taking the fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the friendship of Antonio to Bassanio very great, generous, and tender. The whole fourth act, supposing, as I said, the fact to be probable, is extremely fine. But there are two passages that deserve a particular notice. The first is what Portia says in praise of mercy, and the other on the power of music. [1709]

WILLIAM HAZLITT

from *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*

This is a play that in spite of the change of manners and prejudices still holds undisputed possession of the stage. Shakespear's malignant has outlived Mr. Cumberland's benevolent Jew. In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular bugbear, "baited with the rabble's curse," he becomes a half-favorite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. Shylock is *a good hater*; "a man no less sinned against than sinning." If he carries his revenge too far, yet he has strong grounds for "the lodged hate he bears Anthonio," which he explains with equal force of eloquence and reason. He seems the depository of the vengeance of his race; and though the long habit of brooding over daily insults and injuries has crusted over his temper with inveterate misanthropy, and hardened him against the contempt of mankind, this adds but little to the triumphant pretensions of his enemies. There is a strong, quick, and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. The constant apprehension of being burnt alive, plundered, banished, reviled, and trampled on, might be supposed to sour the most forbearing nature, and to take something from that "milk of human kindness," with which his persecutors contemplated his indignities. The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong; and we can hardly help sympathizing with the proud spirit, hid beneath his "Jewish gaberdine,"

From *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* by William Hazlitt. 2nd ed. London: Taylor & Hessey, 1818.

stung to madness by repeated undeserved provocations, and laboring to throw off the load of obloquy and oppression heaped upon him and all his tribe by one desperate act of "lawful" revenge, till the ferociousness of the means by which he is to execute his purpose, and the pertinacity with which he adheres to it, turn us against him; but even at last, when disappointed of the sanguinary revenge with which he had glutted his hopes, and exposed to beggary and contempt by the letter of the law on which he had insisted with so little remorse, we pity him, and think him hardly dealt with by his judges. In all his answers and retorts upon his adversaries, he has the best not only of the argument but of the question, reasoning on their own principles and practice. They are so far from allowing of any measure of equal dealing, of common justice or humanity between themselves and the Jew, that even when they come to ask a favor of him, and Shylock reminds them that "on such a day they spit upon him, another spurned him, another called him dog, and for these curtesies request he'll lend them so much monies"—Anthonio, his old enemy, instead of any acknowledgment of the shrewdness and justice of his remonstrance, which would have been preposterous in a respectable Catholic merchant in those times, threatens him with a repetition of the same treatment—

"I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too."

After this, the appeal to the Jew's mercy, as if there were any common principle of right and wrong between them, is the rankest hypocrisy, or the blindest prejudice; and the Jew's answer to one of Anthonio's friends, who asks him what his pound of forfeit flesh is good for, is irresistible—

"To bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd me, and hinder'd me of half a million, laughed at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorn'd my nation, thwarted my bargains, cool'd my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes; hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions,

senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer that a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

The whole of the trial scene, both before and after the entrance of Portia, is a masterpiece of dramatic skill. The legal acuteness, the passionate declamations, the sound maxims of jurisprudence, the wit and irony interspersed in it, the fluctuations of hope and fear in the different persons, and the completeness and suddenness of the catastrophe, cannot be surpassed. Shylock, who is his own counsel, defends himself well, and is triumphant on all the general topics that are urged against him, and only fails through a legal flaw. Take the following as an instance—

"Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish part,
Because you bought them:—shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burdens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? you will answer,
The slaves are ours:—so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it:
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice:
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?"

The keenness of his revenge awakes all his faculties; and

he beats back all opposition to his purpose, whether grave or gay, whether of wit or argument, with an equal degree of earnestness and self-possession. His character is displayed as distinctly in other less prominent parts of the play, and we may collect from a few sentences the history of his life—his descent and origin, his thrift and domestic economy, his affection for his daughter, whom he loves next to his wealth, his courtship and his first present to Leah, his wife! "I would not have parted with it" (the ring which he first gave her) "for a wilderness of monkees!" What a fine Hebraism is implied in this expression!

Portia is not a very great favorite with us; neither are we in love with her maid, Nerissa. Portia has a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, which is very unusual in Shakespear's women, but which perhaps was a proper qualification for the office of a "civil doctor," which she undertakes and executes so successfully. The speech about Mercy is very well; but there are a thousand finer ones in Shakespear. We do not admire the scene of the caskets: and object entirely to the Black Prince, Morocchius. We should like Jessica better if she had not deceived and robbed her father, and Lorenzo, if he had not married a Jewess, though he thinks he has a right to wrong a Jew. The dialogue between this newly-married couple by moonlight, beginning "On such a night," etc., is a collection of classical elegancies. Launcelot, the Jew's man, is an honest fellow. The dilemma in which he describes himself placed between his "conscience and the fiend," the one of which advises him to run away from his master's service and the other to stay in it, is exquisitely humorous.

Gratiano is a very admirable subordinate character. He is the jester of the piece: yet one speech of his, in his own defense, contains a whole volume of wisdom.

"Anthonio. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage, where every one must play his part;
And mine a sad one.

Gratiano. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
And let my liver rather heat with wine,

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
 Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
 Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
 Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice
 By being peevish? I tell thee what, Anthonio—
 I love thee, and it is my love that speaks;—
 There are a sort of men, whose visages
 Do cream and mantle like a standing pond:
 And do a wilful stillness entertain,
 With purpose to be drest in an opinion
 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
 As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle,*
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!
 O, my Anthonio, I do know of these,
 That therefore only are reputed wise,
 For saying nothing; who, I am very sure,
 If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
 Which hearing them, would call their brothers, fools.
 I'll tell thee more of this another time:
 But fish not with this melancholy bait,
 For this fool's gudgeon, this opinion."

Gratiano's speech on the philosophy of love, and the effect of habit in taking off the force of passion, is as full of spirit and good sense. The graceful winding up of this play in the fifth act, after the tragic business is despatched, is one of the happiest instances of Shakespear's knowledge of the principles of the drama. We do not mean the pretended quarrel between Portia and Nerissa and their husbands about the rings, which is amusing enough, but the conversation just before and after the return of Portia to her own house, beginning "How sweet the moonlights sleeps upon this bank," and ending "Peace! how the moon sleeps with Endymion, and would not be awaked." There is a number of beautiful thoughts crowded into that short space, and linked together by the most natural transitions.

When we first went to see Mr. Kean in Shylock, we expected to see, what we had been used to see, a decrepit old man, bent with age and ugly with mental deformity, grinning with deadly malice, with the venom of his heart congealed in the expression of his countenance, sullen, morose, gloomy,

inflexible, brooding over one idea, that of his hatred, and fixed on one unalterable purpose, that of his revenge. We were disappointed, because we had taken our idea from other actors, not from the play. There is no proof there that Shylock is old, but a single line, "Bassanio and *old* Shylock, both stand forth"—which does not imply that he is infirm with age—and the circumstance that he has a daughter marriageable, which does not imply that he is old at all. It would be too much to say that his body should be made crooked and deformed to answer to his mind, which is bowed down and warped with prejudices and passion. That he has but one idea is not true; he has more ideas than any other person in the piece; and if he is intense and inveterate in the pursuit of his purpose, he shows the utmost elasticity, vigor, and presence of mind, in the means of attaining it. But so rooted was our habitual impression of the part from seeing it caricatured in the representation, that it was only from a careful perusal of the play itself that we saw our error. The stage is not in general the best place to study our author's characters in. It is too often filled with traditional commonplace conceptions of the part, handed down from sire to son, and suited to the taste of *the great vulgar and the small*—"Tis an unweeded garden: things rank and gross do merely gender in it!" If a man of genius comes once in an age to clear away the rubbish, to make it fruitful and wholesome, they cry, "'Tis a bad school: it may be like nature, it may be like Shakespear, but it is not like us." Admirable critics!

ANONYMOUS

Henry Irving's Shylock

The production by Mr. Irving at the Lyceum of *The Merchant of Venice* was eagerly expected and had a double source of certain attraction. The beauties of Miss Ellen Terry's Portia were already known; those of Mr. Irving's Shylock had to be discovered. The character of Shylock has given food for much discussion. It is well known that modern interpretations of the part have differed entirely from those given by the actors who, before the days of Macklin, treated the part from the point of view of the most grotesque comedy; and a good many people have told us how Shakspeare intended it to be treated. Mr. Hawkins, in the current number of the *Theatre* magazine, has argued very ingeniously and interestingly, from the fact that *The Merchant of Venice* appeared during the excitement caused by the iniquities of the Jew physician, Rodrigo Lopez, that the play was intended by its author as "a plea for toleration towards the Jews." The theory is well worked out and hangs well enough together, since it is admitted that, supposing this to have been Shakspeare's intention, his position as a manager, bound to please his public, hampered him in its execution. But we have always been of opinion that theorizing as to Shakspeare's intentions and the meanings of his characters, however interesting it may be as an exercise of ingenuity, has little practical import. It will hardly seem probable that Shakspeare was in the habit of sitting down with a set purpose to teach certain moral lessons by means

From *The Saturday Review*, November 8, 1879.

of certain characters, to be rendered in certain definite ways; and yet one might infer from the work of commentators that this was the case. No manager or play-writer could believe that any part would ever be given in precisely the same way by any two actors, except so far as it might be done by servile imitation; and, indeed, to make this possible would involve a degradation of character to caricature. Such a broad rule as that Shylock ought not to be played as a low-comedy part, or that Lear ought not to be from beginning to end a driveling idiot, may of course be laid down; but one has surely no more right to expect an actor to execute a part in the way imagined to be right by commentators than to demand that a painter should seize just this or that aspect of a great historical subject. The enthusiasm aroused by Mr. Irving's Shylock, even in those who find his rendering of the character differ from their view of it, goes, however, to prove that, as has been suggested, an elaborate analysis of Shakspeare's characters made from studying the text is valuable chiefly as a mental exercise.

Mr. Irving presents Shylock as a picturesque figure, with an air as of a man feeling the bitterness of oppression, and conscious of his own superiority in all but circumstance to the oppressor—a feeling which is finely indicated when, in talk with Antonio, he touches the Christian merchant, and, seeing the action resented, bows deprecatingly, with an affectation of deep humility. He dwells with concentrated bitterness on the expressions of hatred to Antonio in the speech beginning "How like a fawning publican he looks;" and here, in the implacable determination of "If I can catch him once upon the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him," we have the prologue, as it were, to the intense revengefulness of the last scene. It may be noted that since the first night Mr. Irving's performance has gained in leading up consistently to its climax—as consistently, that is, as is possible in the case of a human creature worked on by mixed emotions which sometimes baffle scrutiny. The point which on the first night seemed most striking to many people in the general scope of the actor's representation was that his Shylock was intended to be, before all things, dignified, and it was thought that his acting in the scene when

he bewails the loss of his daughter and his ducats was at variance with the rest of the performance. It would perhaps be neither easy nor desirable to make Shylock altogether dignified at this point; but it is not the less true that Mr. Irving has improved the rendering of this scene, and, with it, the whole value of his representation.

To return, however, to Mr. Irving's first scene, we may note specially the bitterness of subdued scorn in the speech beginning "Signior Antonio, many a time and oft in the Rialto you have rated me," and the diabolical mockery of good humor with which he proposes the "merry bond." In the next scene in which the Jew appears we have again his hatred and desire for revenge marked strongly in the resolution to go forth to supper "in hate, to feed upon the prodigal Christian," and to part with Launcelot "to one that I would have him help to waste his borrowed purse;" and at the end of the act Mr. Irving has introduced a singularly fine touch of invention. Lorenzo has fled with his stolen bride and her stolen money, and a crowd of masquers has crossed the stage and disappeared over the picturesque bridge with laughter and music. Then Shylock is seen, lantern in hand, advancing, bent in thought; and, as he comes close to his robbed and deserted house, the curtain falls. The effect, however, would, to our thinking, be doubled if the curtain had not fallen for a moment and been raised again just before this appearance of Shylock—if the masquers had disappeared in sight of the audience, and the sounds of revelry had died away in the distance. It may be conjectured that the dropping of the curtain signifies the interval of time which might naturally elapse between the elopement and Shylock's return; but this is, we think, needless. Mr. Irving, in the scene already referred to of the third act, is now less vehement than might have been expected; the Jew's passion seems to have exhausted him, but is not for that the less intense in itself. He is overweighted with trouble, and the delivery of the words "no ill luck stirring, but what lights o' my shoulders; no sighs, but o' my breathing; no tears, but o' my shedding," is charged with the pathos of the heaviest grief, and it may be the importance given by the actor's feeling and art to this passage which makes one

think that less than its due value is given to the following passage about Leah's ring.

It is, however, in the fourth act, as is fitting, that the actor's complete triumph is attained, and in this there seems to us no room for anything but admiration. From the moment of his entrance to that of his finding his revenge torn from him he is the very incarnation of deadly, resistless hatred. While he listens to the Duke's speech in mitigation he has the horrible stillness and fascination of the rattlesnake. When he answers, his speech is that of a man possessed of his purpose, coldly tenacious of his rights. His object has been gained, and the passion which has been concentrated on it will not deign to waste itself in supporting a position that is unassailable. His scorn of Gratiano's railings seems bitter from habit, and not because he is one whit moved by them. There is something appalling in his aspect when he stands waiting for the long desired moment with the knife in one hand and the scales in the other, and his pointing to the bond with the knife as he asks, "Is it so nominated in the bond?" is admirably conceived and executed. When the moment of defeat arrives it strikes him like lightning, but its effect, like that of his expected triumph, is so powerful that it cannot find expression in any accustomed use of gesture or attitude. He is still in his despair as in his victory; but it is the stillness of one suffering instead of threatening death. Where he before inspired terror, he cannot now but command respect for the very awfulness of his downthrow. He leaves the court with a dignity that seems the true expression of his belief in his nation and himself. His mind is occupied with greater matters than the light jeers of Gratiano, and to these jeers he replies with three slow downward movements of the head, which are infinitely expressive of his acceptance of that which has befallen him and of his power to bear himself nobly under its weight. "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing," and what he says at this moment seems empty indeed when answered with this silent eloquence. Nothing could be finer than Mr. Irving's acting at this point, which is the climax of a scene the power and imagination of which can scarcely be rivaled.

The striking excellences of Miss Ellen Terry's Portia are, if anything, bettered by being transferred to a larger stage than that on which they were first presented to a London audience. Every changing phase of the part is rendered with the highest instinct and art, and every change seems natural and easy. The tenderness; the love so fine that it finds no check to open acknowledgment; the wit, the dignity; and in the last scene the desire to be merciful and to inspire mercy, giving way to a just and overwhelming wrath, and followed again by the natural playfulness of the lady who is not the less a great lady because she indulges it, are alike rendered with a skill that one must call perfect. As feats of acting the assumption to Nerissa of a bragging youth's manner, and the exit in the trial scene are specially remarkable; but it is needless to point out in detail the patent beauties of a performance with which we can find no fault.

ELMER EDGAR STOLL

from *Shylock*

As much as fifteen years ago¹ Professor Wendell expressed the opinion, which Professor Matthews has of late reasserted, that Shylock was rightly represented on the stage in Shakespeare's time as a comic character, and rightly in our time as sympathetically human; but the dramatist's intention he left in the dark. . . .

The dramatist's intention—that, I must believe, together with his success or failure in fulfilling it, is the only matter of importance. . . .

Only now and then have critics frankly denied it, and declared that the purpose of the author has only an historical interest. That way, they seem to see, if not madness, chaos lies. For thus a work of art means anything, everything—that is, nothing—and what is the use of discussing it? . . .

The puzzle whether *The Merchant of Venice* is not meant for tragedy . . . is cleared up when, as Professor Baker suggests, we forget Sir Henry Irving's acting, and remember that the title—and the hero—is not the "Jew of Venice" as he would lead us to suppose. . . .

Hero or not, Shylock is given a villain's due. His is the heaviest penalty to be found in all the pound of flesh

From *Shakespeare Studies* by E. E. Stoll. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927. Grateful acknowledgment is made to Mrs. Doris Franklin for permission to reprint these excerpts.

¹ This essay was written in 1911. The editor has abbreviated it and deleted the footnotes citing abundant authorities. The remaining footnotes have been renumbered [editor's note].

stories, including that in *Il Pecorone*, which served as a model for the play . . . —impoverishment, sentence of death, and an outrage done to his faith from which Jews were guarded even by decrees of German emperors and Roman pontiffs. . . . We know that the poet is not with Shylock, for on that point, in this play as in every other, the impartial, inscrutable poet leaves little or nothing to suggestion or surmise. As is his custom elsewhere, by the comments of the good characters, by the methods pursued in the disposition of scenes, and by the downright avowals of soliloquy, he constantly sets us right.

As for the first of these artifices, all the people who come in contact with Shylock except Tubal—among them being those of his own house, his servant and his daughter—have a word or two to say on the subject of his character, and never a good one. And in the same breath they spend on Bassanio and Antonio, his enemies, nothing but words of praise. . . .

As for the second artifice, the ordering of the scenes is such as to enforce this contrast. . . . Launcelot and Jessica, in separate scenes, are introduced before Shylock reaches home, that, hearing their story, we may side with them, and, when the old curmudgeon appears, may be moved to laughter as he complains of Launcelot's gormandizing, sleeping, and rending apparel out. . . . Still more conspicuous is this care when Shylock laments over his daughter and his ducats. Lest then by any chance a stupid or tender-hearted audience should not laugh but grieve, Solanio reports his outcries—in part word for word—two scenes in advance, as matter of mirth to himself and all the boys in Venice. . . .

As for the third artifice, that a sleepy audience may not make the mistake of the cautious critic and take the villain for the hero, Shakespeare is at pains to label the villain by an aside at the moment the hero appears on the boards:

I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.

Those are his motives, later confessed repeatedly;² and either one brands him a villain more unmistakably in that day, as we shall see, than in ours. . . .

Only twice does Shakespeare seem to follow Shylock's pleadings and reasonings with any sympathy—"Hath a dog money?" in the first scene in which he appears, and "Hath not a Jew eyes?" in the third act—but a bit too much has been made of this. Either plea ends in such fashion as to alienate the audience. To Shylock's reproaches the admirable Antonio, "one of the gentlest and humblest of all the men in Shakespeare's theater" [i.e., dramas], praised and honored by everyone but Shylock, retorts, secure in his virtue, that he is just as like to spit on him and spurn him again. And Shylock's celebrated justification of his race runs headlong into a justification of his villainy: "The villainy which you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction." "Hath not a Jew eyes?" and he proceeds to show that your Jew is no less than a man, and as such has a right, not to respect or compassion, as the critics for a century have had it, but to revenge. Neither large nor lofty are his claims. . . .

By all the devices, then, of Shakespeare's dramaturgy Shylock is proclaimed, as by the triple repetition of a crier, to be the villain, though a comic villain or butt. Nor does the poet let pass any of the prejudices of that day which might heighten this impression. A miser, a moneylender, a Jew—all three had from time immemorial been objects of popular detestation and ridicule, whether in life or on the stage. The union of them in one person is in Shakespeare's time the rule . . . : to the popular imagination a moneylender was a sordid miser with a hooked nose. So it is in the acknowledged prototype of Shylock, Marlowe's "bottle-nosed" monster, Barabas, the Jew of Malta. . . .

In the Elizabethan drama and character-writing, then, the Jew is both moneylender and miser, a villain who hankers after the Christian's blood, a gross egoist, even an atheist (though charged with dealings with the devil), and at the same time a butt, a hook-nosed niggard. And

² I.iii.39f.; III.i.51.; III. iii. 2, 22f. [Stoll's note condensed].

a similar spirit of rude caricature and boisterous burlesque, with even less of characterization, prevails, we have seen, in the treatment of the Jew in early popular drama on the Continent. Such is the soil from which the figure of Shylock grew; for almost everything in Shakespeare is a growth, and strikes root deep in the present and in the past, in stage tradition and in the life about him.

The tradition having been examined, it now remains to examine the opinions, or antipathies, of the time—a sorry tale to tell. Critics have wondered at the knowledge of Jewish character displayed by Shakespeare; but Sir Sidney Lee some years since³ showed that although banished from England in 1290, and not readmitted until the latter days of Cromwell, Jews were then not unknown. "Store of Jewes we have in England," to quote *The Wandering Jew Telling Fortunes to Englishmen* (1640); "a few in Court, many in the Citty, more in the Countrey." In 1594, shortly before *The Merchant of Venice* was written, one of these Jews at court made something of a stir. Lopez, the Queen's physician, was tried for conspiracy against her life. Sir Sidney Lee has shown the bitterness of feeling which it provoked, and the weight that was given to the fact that the offender was a Jew by prosecutor, judges, and people. "The perjured and murderous Jewish doctor," cried Coke, "is worse than Judas himself"; and "of a religious profession," he said again, "fit for any execrable undertaking." Even his judges spoke of him as "that vile Jew." Though no longer a Jew by faith, when he protested from the scaffold that "he loved the Queen as he loved Jesus Christ," such words "from a man of the Jewish profession," says Camden, were "heard not without laughter"; and "He is

³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1880, p. 187 f.; *Academy*, May 14, 1887; *Transactions of New Shakespeare Society*, 1888. Commonly they followed the trade of old-clothes dealer, it appears from a passage quoted by Sir Sidney Lee from *Every Woman in her Humour* (1609), and from Rowley's *Search for Money*, p. 15—as both now and in the days of St. Jerome. Creizenach quotes Heywood's *Challenge for Beauty* (1635) on their character: "Your English Jewes, they'le buy and sell their fathers, prostrate their wives, and make money of their own children, the male stewes can wnesse that." (*Works*, vol. v, 26.)

a Jew!" men cried aloud as the breath passed from his body. "And what's his reason?" asks Shylock in the play; "I am a Jew!"

Of itself this incident is enough to show that although there was by no means a Jewish peril in Shakespeare's day, the race-hatred of Angevin times had not burned out. Race-hatred, indeed, or the desire to profit by it, may have prompted the writing of this play, that Shakespeare's company might in the present excitement compete with Henslowe's in their *Jew of Malta*. Even the Reformation, in England as in Germany, had done little to quench it: only the later Puritans felt any relentings towards the chosen race. Hebrews of the Hebrews themselves, it was small wonder. The visionaries, the Fifth Monarchy men, the Root-and-Branch men, often looked almost kindly upon the Jews as they made the Jewish Sabbath henceforth and for ever the British Sabbath, contemplated surrounding Cromwell with a *Sanhedrim* of seventy councillors, and urged on Parliament the establishing of the *Torah* as the law of the realm. But the nation as a whole was not so minded; with it race-hatred went deeper than religion. Cromwell admitted the Jews in 1655; but it had to be, as Graetz remarks, by the back door, for the Commission designated to sit upon the measure was under the necessity of being admonished and dissolved like Parliament itself. Prynne, who for his own faith had lost his ears, wrote what was, measured by his own professional dissenter's standard, a *Short Demurrer*, in two parts, in which, like Luther a century before him, he raked up all the charges against the Jews that had ever been made, including usury, coining, cheating and oppression, crucifixion of children, blasphemy and sacrilege, malice towards man and God, the murder of Christ, obstinacy and hardness of heart. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?" he cries, with none to contradict him, in his zeal; "I hate them with a perfect hatred." And others there were like him, as appears from the petition to Parliament of Robert Rich, surnamed Mordecai, in 1653, on behalf of the Jews of England, Scotland, and Ireland: "Ever since 1648, it was hoped that persecution for conscience' sake would cease

and truth and mercy take its place, but contrary thereto, these three last years hundreds in England have been cast into dungeons and prisons, some have perished, and others endured whippings, stonings, and spoilings of goods for matters concerning their law and conscience," etc. Even after these persecutions had, under Cromwell's iron hand, been allayed, and the Jews admitted to the rights of worship, it was upon a precarious basis. The doors of the first synagogue were threefold and double-locked. In 1660, a remonstrance upon their usurious and fraudulent practices was made by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen to the King, praying for the imposition on them of special taxes, seizure of their personal property, and banishment for residence without a license. Even after the Revolution, in 1689, a bill specially to tax the Jews was introduced into Parliament.

Such were the disabilities under which the Jews labored for a century after Shakespeare's day. What is the recorded opinion of his contemporaries? Coke, Solicitor-General, is comprehensible in abusing Lopez, but he is hardly so as, no longer Solicitor but a jurist, ex-Chief Justice of the King's Bench, he abuses the Jews in his *Institutes of the Laws of England*. "Odious," he calls them in his commentary on the *Statute De Judaismo*, "both to God and man;"—"these cruel Jews, wicked and wretched men." Bishop Joseph Hall, writing to Samuel Burton, Archdeacon of Gloucester, in 1607, rejoices that "our church is well rid of that accursed nation, whom yet Rome harbors . . . while instead of spitting at, or that their Neapolitan correction whereof Gratian speaks, the Pope solemnly receives at their hands that Bible which they at once approve and overthrow." He hates Rome for her tolerance and indulgence, forsooth. "The subtlest and most subdolous people," writes James Howell in 1633 to Lord Clifford; "the most hateful race of men." Jeremy Taylor thinks it is a wonder how the anger of God is gone out upon that miserable people. And Robert South, the greatest preacher in England a century after Shakespeare's death, declares, in a long and virulent passage, that it was

appointed as the bitterest humiliation of Christ's life on earth that he should be born of the race of the Jews, "the most sordid and degenerate upon the earth." "And to this very day," he continues, "how much are they disgusted in all those kingdoms and dominions where they are dispersed! They are like dung upon the face of the earth; and that not so much for their being scattered as for being so offensive."

Nor is it a legal or theological prejudice merely. Popular literature, like the drama, is, as we have already seen, imbued with it; and dozens of ballads, like *Hugh of Lincoln* and *Gernutus*, still handed it down orally from generation to generation. Enlightenment prevailed not against it. . . . Frightful persecutions, the Jew-burnings, which at times of great emotional exaltation or depression raged through Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were almost always popular movements, not instigated or directed by the church; and princes, kings, emperors, popes like Clement VI, even fanatics like Saint Bernard, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, had, time and again, to interpose between the Jews and the violence of the mob. Converts fared little better than the faithful. And it was not the priest-ridden countries but those which first attained to a consciousness of national unity—England, France, Spain—as Wellhausen has shown, that expelled the Jews from their borders. In Italy, hard by the papal throne, they enjoyed greater security. In England, in the twentieth year of Henry III, the inhabitants of Southampton petitioned the king for a like privilege with the men of Newcastle, that no Jew should dwell amongst them, and Parliament granted Edward I a fifteenth in return for the favor of expelling the Jewish community as a whole. If, then, the hatred of Jews is at bottom a racial and social, rather than a religious, prejudice, and not Protestantism, not even the free thought of the Renaissance, but only Puritan fanaticism, late in the seventeenth century, availed, in any measure, to dispel it, why should we refuse to recognize it in Shakespeare, who, more than any other poet, reflected the settled prejudices and passions of his race?

To the Middle Ages, in the dearth of Jews and contemporary references to Jews in Elizabethan England, we must turn for illustration—but medieval is the sentiment of this comedy. Most readers and critics nowadays resent the despoiling of Shylock at the end. Indeed, where is there another instance of a villain in a Shakespearean comedy, with such cause for his villainy, coming off so ill? But even a century later, as we have seen, a sense of justice did not keep the government from the consideration of measures of confiscation and extra taxation; and all the European history of the Jewish race for a thousand years before is made up of such measures, put, without consideration, into effect. In the days of Titus, and afterwards in every nation and principality of Europe, they were *servi cameræ*; and, in return for the slight protection they thus received, they were pillaged and plundered, legally or illegally. Of his Jews every feudatory-in-chief spoke as of his serfs or his hounds; and he sold them, or bought them, or mortgaged them, or, like William Rufus waxed furious in defense of them, according to his needs. The king took possession of all the real property of which a Jew was seized, in case of his "death, outlawry, or departure hence" (or, in some parts of Europe, as soon, apparently, as he was known to have purchased it); and, in defiance of the fourth Lateran Council, of all property whatsoever, as the fruits of usury, on his conversion. "*Judæus vero nihil proprium habere potest*," says Bracton (and the principle prevailed far beyond the Channel); "*quia quidquid acquirit non sibi acquirit sed regi, quia non vivunt sibi ipsis sed aliis, et sic aliis acquirunt et non sibi ipsis*." "They are doomed to perpetual servitude," writes Saint Thomas Aquinas, "and the lords of the earth may use their goods as their own." "The curse of the Patriarch rests upon the descendants of Ham," declared in 1851 the Supreme Court of Georgia, with reference to another subject race; "the Negro and his master are but fulfilling a divine appointment." A medieval sentiment, but alive in Shakespeare's day and not-totally extinct in our own.

Nor were men content with injustice that was legal. . . . We do not forget that Shylock was also a usurer. Dr.

Honigmann, who is one of them that interpret *The Merchant of Venice* as a plea for toleration, says that in Shakespeare's day the word did not carry with it any stigma. Never, surely, was opinion more mistaken. By laws civil and ecclesiastical, usury—that is, the exaction of interest of any sort—was a crime. With expanding trade and manufacture the practice was widening, but was by no one approved in principle. By 37 *Henry VIII*, cap. ix, the old laws against usury are, indeed, abolished, and a rate of ten percent is indirectly legalized by the fixing of severe penalties for any rate higher; but the practice is condemned, and classed with corrupt bargains. . . . In 1552, however, by 6 *Edward VI*, cap. xx, the act of Henry VIII is annulled . . . and severe penalties are enacted against any usury whatever, “forasmuch as Usurie is by the word of God utterly prohibited, as a vyce most odyous and detestable. . . .” In 1570, by 13 *Elizabeth*, cap. viii, 6 *Edward VI* is annulled and 37 *Henry VIII* re-enacted, but “foreasmuch as all Usurie, being forbydden by the Law of God is synne and detestable,” it ordains that even interest at ten percent or under is forfeitable. . . . It is expressly provided that all offenders shall “also be punished and corrected according to the ecclesiastical laws heretofore made against usury.” . . .

[By another and earlier law of Elizabeth's reign, usury is one of the five crimes for which an offender may be subject to excommunication.]

Shylock was both moneylender and Jew. In him are embodied two of the deepest and most widely prevalent social antipathies of two thousand years, prevalent still, but in Shakespeare's day sanctioned by the teachings of religion besides. All that was religious in them Shakespeare probably shared like any other easygoing churchman; but all that was popular and of the people was part and parcel of his breath and blood. . . .

Those who will have it that Shylock, though bad, was made so, do violence to Shakespeare in two different ways. In the first place, they have recourse to an all-pervading irony. Antonio, gentlest and humblest of Shakespeare's

heroes, kicking and spitting at Jews and thrusting salvation down their throats,—such, they say, is the spectacle of race-hatred pointed at by the poet. And those others who will have it that Shylock is a noble spirit brought to shame, carry the irony still further, into the characterization of Antonio and his friends. He, not Shylock, is the caricature: his virtues are but affectations and shams; his friends are parasites, spendthrifts, and fribbles! They make no effort to raise the three thousand ducats to save him, they do not even provide him with a surgeon against his need.⁴ That is, nothing is what it seems; a comedy ending in moonlight blandishments and badinage is a tragedy, and the play written for the customers of the Globe flies over their honest heads to the peaks of nineteenth-century criticism. Irony is surely unthinkable unless the author intends it, and here not the slightest trace of such an intention appears. Moreover, a play of Shakespeare's is self-contained; the irony is within it, so to speak, not underneath it. There is irony in the appearance of Banquo at the moment when Macbeth presumes hypocritically to wish for his presence at the feast; or, more obviously still, in the fulfilment of the Witches' riddling oracles; but there is no irony, as we have seen, such as Mr. Yeats discovers in the success of Henry V and the failure of Richard II. There is irony in the situation of a king so powerful reduced to a state so pitiful, before he has "shook off the regal thoughts wherewith he reigned"; but Shakespeare does not dream that to fail and be a Richard is better than to succeed and be a Henry—or an Antonio. He knows not the way of thinking which lightly sets the judgment of the world aside, nor the ways of modern artistic expression, which almost withholds the purport of the higher judgment from the world. No abysmal irony undermines his solid sense and straightforward meaning. Shylock is indeed condemned;

⁴ These are only cases of neglect, which in Shakespeare abound. But as I have said elsewhere, only the positive counts, or else the negative made as prominent as the positive. On the stage—particularly the popular and Shakespearean stage—it is what a man does, not what he leaves undone, that makes the character; on the stage there are, so to speak, no sins of omission.

Sir Henry Irving took no counsel of the poet when he made his exit from the ducal palace in pathetic triumph.

Nor is Jessica treated with malice, in mockery or irony, as, having forsaken him and robbed him and never since given him a regretful or pitying thought, she now revels in jest and sentiment, in moonlight and melody, at Belmont. . . . Signior Croce may be horrified at Jessica as was Rousseau at the unfilial Cléante; but just as sympathy at the theater traditionally is for the debtor and against the moneylender, so it is for the amorous son or eloping daughter and against the hard-hearted, stingy father. Thus it had been on the stage since the days of Plautus; cheating the old man was both sport for the slave and relief for the son's necessities. Either consideration gave pleasure in the comic theater. It is not ideal justice—that is not the business of comedy. . . .

In the second place, they do violence to Shakespeare, as Mr. Hudson observes, in representing Shylock as the product of his environment. The thoughts of men had hardly begun to run in such channels; the ancient rigors of retribution held fast; men still believed in heaven and hell, in villains and heroes. Though in Shakespeare there is little of George Eliot's moral austerity, as brought to bear on Tito Melema, for instance, Mr. Yeats errs, I think, in the opinion that his plays are, like all great literature, "written in the spirit of the Forgiveness of Sin." Macbeth is not forgiven, nor is Othello. Richard III and Iago were damned even in the making. Though the shortcomings of Falstaff, Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym serve a while as food for mirth, Shakespeare is in full accord with Henry V as he casts his fellows out of his company and out of his mind, to meet their end, maybe, in the brothel or on the gallows. And he is in full accord with Portia and the Duke in the judgment scene. Except in comedy, he has not the spirit of forgiveness which, like Uncle Toby's towards the Devil, comes of mere kindness of heart; and neither in comedy nor in tragedy has he the forgiveness of our psychological and social drama and novel, where both villains and heroes are no more, which comes of fullness of knowledge. Thus he deals with poverty, the hard-hearted, greasy,

foul-smelling, ignorant and ungrateful multitude, for which he so often utters his aversion; and thus he deals with the kindred subject of heredity. If a scoundrel is a bastard, or is mean of birth, the fact is not viewed as an extenuating circumstance, but is turned to a reproach. It may in a sense explain his depravity, but never explain it away. It sets the seal upon it. It confirms the prejudice that there is a difference between noble blood and that of low degree. So, though our hearts are softened by Shylock's recital of the indignities he has suffered, the hearts of the Elizabethans, by a simpler way of thinking, are hardened. It confirms the prejudice that there is a difference betwixt Christian and Jew. The Fathers, Protestant theologians like Luther, seventeenth-century lawyers like Coke and Prynne, review the pitiful story of the Jews in Europe grimly, with at best a momentary and furtive pathos. It proves their notion of the curse. . . .

With this conventionality in mind [i.e., that the under-dog deserves his fate] we may approach the final question, whether villain and [comic] butt as Shylock is, he may not also be, as Professor Schelling thinks, a pathetic creation. As we have seen, he speaks of Shylock as "semi-humorous," a character in whom there is a grotesqueness bordering on laughter and a pathos bordering on tears. The union of butt and villain is common in Shakespeare's day, as old indeed as the stupid devils of the miracle-plays; and the union of villain and droll goes back to the cleverer devils, and the devils of Dante and medieval painting, and underlies the characterization of most of the villains—Aaron and Iago, for instance—in Shakespearean and Elizabethan drama. But villain, butt, and pathetic figure, all in one, is a thing difficult to conceive. . . .

Before, then, we take up this question whether Shylock is also pathetic, we must consider some fundamental principles, too much ignored: (1) That the interpretation of literature—and of drama even more—is, as we have seen, mainly a study in emphasis. (2) That much comedy skirts the confines of tragedy, and what keeps it comedy is emphasis, or a conventional "isolation," as Monsieur

Bergson has called it. (3) That comedy follows without question the manners and prejudices of the time. (4) That in the Shylock scenes there is so large an element of formal external comic technique that it is impossible to consider Shylock only "semi-humorous," in part pathetic. . . .

On the third principle we have been touching already. . . . This Rousseau pointed out long ago, and Monsieur Bergson has made it still clearer. The comic character is "*insocial*," out of harmony with his social environment; and the spectator is kept "*insensible*," unsympathetic—there, as Monsieur Bergson says, are two prerequisites. . . .

Now, in London there was no such refined society, or highly unified, organized, and sensitive social consciousness, as in Paris at the time of Molière, or in Athens at the time of Aristophanes; and Shakespeare, by temperament, was not a satirist; but nevertheless the comic spirit and method of all three dramatists had something in common, and the less refined the social consciousness, the more vindictive it is if aroused. Shakespeare's comedies are of course romantic, sentimental, and fanciful; but this contrast of low life with high life is one of his sources of comic effect as well; and honest but humble folk in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado*, *As You Like It*, and *The Winter's Tale* are made almost unbelievably stupid and ridiculous, while those who in vanity aspire to rise above their appointed place and station, like Justice Shallow and Malvolio, are cheated or made the victims of a ruthless practical joke. Sir Toby, Maria, and the Clown sport with Malvolio while he howls in torment; and Autolycus, to the delight of himself and the audience, fleeces simple, trusting souls who have no fault save their rusticity. . . . But the most remarkable prejudice brought to bear for a comic effect in Shakespeare, is (as, from what has been said, might have been expected) not one which arises out of the *beau monde* at all but out of the people, society in the largest sense. It is the prejudice against Jew, miser, usurer. In each of these roles singly Shylock could not but be a purely repellent or comic figure on the stage because he was an object of derision in the street, indeed by tradition was on the stage as a comic figure already established;

and in these roles combined and united, not in a tragedy, but in a comedy, how could he possibly be thought pathetic at all?

. . . We here approach the last principle—the situation has been hedged about with the most explicitly comic technique and apparatus. . . . Here, quite apart from the social and racial prejudices . . . are the comic devices of repetition and inversion, as well as others less easily designated.

By repetition I mean, as in chapter IV, not the repetition of words or phrases at happy junctures . . . but the repetition of a *motif*, as in the daughter-ducats dialogue with Tubal, and in this case it takes the form of alternation:

Tubal. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shylock. Out upon her. Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

This, most critics assert, the great historian [Creizenach] of the drama almost alone dissenting, is pathos: it is not the ducats behind the turquoise ("a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort!") but the thought of Leah that wrings his heart. "What a fine Hebraism is implied in this expression!" cries Hazlitt. "He has so deep a veneration for his dead wife," says Hawkins, with impenetrable gravity, "that a wilderness of monkeys would not compensate for the loss of the ring she had given him in youth." More Elizabethan fun running to waste! . . . Now he shrieks in grief for his ducats or his daughter; now in glee at Antonio's ruin. In his rage at the trading of a turquoise for a monkey, he blurts out, true to his native instincts, "not for a wilderness of monkeys!" and the Elizabethan audience, as well as some few readers today, have the heart—or the want of it—to think the valuation funny. . . .

Wrenched from the context, there are phrases, even

sentences, that may, indeed, seem pathetic. But Shakespeare, as soon as Tubal enters, lets Shylock strike up the tune of "my daughter—my ducats," and, adhering to the method of comic alternation throughout the scene, plays the familiar dramatic trick of taking the audience in for a moment and of then clapping upon the seemingly pathetic sentiment a cynical, selfish, or simply incongruous one:

Two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot—and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hears'd at my foot—and the ducats in her coffin.

. . . The pathos is a pretense, a moment's illusion; the laughter alone is real. Nor is it restrained—it is nothing less than a roar. . . .

Then there is inversion, the tables turned. . . . The trial scene is an example. . . .

Professor Baker holds that Shakespeare evinces a sense of dramatic values in presenting Shylock's disappointment as tragic in his own eyes, amusing in Gratiano's. How is the tragic value presented? By the miser and usurer's prostrate prayer to the Duke to take his life if he would take his wealth, or by the plea that he is not well? The biter bitten, is the gibe cast at him at the end of *Il Pecorone*; and that, exactly, is the spirit of the scene. . . . Shylock's disappointment is tragic to him, but good care is taken that it shall not be to us. Shakespeare is less intent on values than on the conduct and direction of our sympathies through the scene. This he manages both by the action and the comment. The scene is a rise and a fall, a triumph turned into a defeat, an apparent tragedy into a comedy; and the defeat is made to repeat the stages of the triumph so as to bring home to us the fact—the comic fact—of retribution. When fortune turns, almost all the steps of the ladder whereby Shylock with scales and knife had climbed to clutch the fruit of revenge he must now descend empty-handed and in bitterness; and what had been offered to him and refused by him, he is now, when he demands it again, refused. With the course of the action the comment

is in perfect accord and unison, marking and signaling the stages of Shylock's fall. The outcries against the Jew and his stony heart, of the Duke, Bassanio, and Gratiano—protested against by Antonio as futile—give place to the jeers of Gratiano and the irony of the fair judge. Gratiano is not the only one to crow. "Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st—Soft! The Jew shall have all justice—Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture—Tarry, Jew; the law hath yet another hold on you—Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?" Aimed at Shylock as he pleads and squirms, these words fall from lips which had a moment before extolled the heavenly qualities of mercy! But for more than the meager mercy which Shylock is shown there is neither time nor place, the crowing fits the latter part of the action as perfectly as the indignant comment had fitted the earlier, and we must equally accept it or divest the scene of meaning and sense. The Jew's very words are echoed by Portia and Gratiano as they jeer, and at every turn that the course of justice takes (welcomed by Shylock, while it was in his favor, with hoarse cries of gloating and triumph) there are now peals and shouts of laughter, such laughter as arises when Tartuffe the hypocrite is caught by Orgon—"un rire se lève de tous les coins de la salle, un rire de vengeance si vous voulez, un rire amer, un rire violent." The running fire assails him to the very moment—and beyond it—that Shylock says he is not well, and staggers out, amid Gratiano's jeers touching his baptism, to provoke in the audience the laughter of triumph and vengeance in his own day and bring tears to their eyes in ours. How can we here for a moment sympathize with Shylock unless at the same time we indignantly turn, not only against Gratiano, but against Portia, the Duke, and all Venice as well?

Suggested References

The number of possible references is vast and grows alarmingly. (The *Shakespeare Quarterly* devotes a substantial part of one issue each year to a list of the previous year's work, and *Shakespeare Survey*—an annual publication—includes a substantial review of recent scholarship, as well as an occasional essay surveying a few decades of scholarship on a chosen topic.) Though no works are indispensable, those listed below have been found helpful.

1. Shakespeare's Times

- Byrne, M. St. Clare. *Elizabethan Life in Town and Country*. Rev. ed. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1961. Chapters on manners, beliefs, education, etc., with illustrations.
- Craig, Hardin. *The Enchanted Glass: the Elizabethan Mind in Literature*. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1936. The Elizabethan intellectual climate.
- Joseph, B. L. *Shakespeare's Eden: The Commonwealth of England 1558-1629*. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1971. An account of the social, political, economic, and cultural life of England.
- Nicoll, Allardyce (ed.). *The Elizabethans*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1957. An anthology of Elizabethan writings, especially valuable for its illustrations from paintings, title pages, etc.
- Shakespeare's England*. 2 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1916. A large collection of scholarly essays on a wide variety of topics (e.g., astrology, costume, gardening, horsemanship), with special attention to Shakespeare's references to these topics.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1943; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944. A brief account of some Elizabethan ideas of the universe.
- Wilson, John Dover (ed.). *Life in Shakespeare's England*. 2nd ed. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913. An anthology of Elizabethan writings on the countryside, superstition, education, the court, etc.

2. Shakespeare

- Bentley, Gerald E. *Shakespeare: A Biographical Handbook*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961. The facts about Shakespeare, with virtually no conjecture intermingled.
- Bradby, Anne (ed.). *Shakespeare Criticism, 1919-1935*. London: Oxford University Press, 1936. A small anthology of excellent essays on the plays.
- Bush, Geoffrey Douglas. *Shakespeare and the Natural Condition*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1956. A short, sensitive account of Shakespeare's view of "Nature," touching most of the works.

- Chambers, E. K. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1930. An invaluable, detailed reference work; not for the casual reader.
- Chute, Marchette. *Shakespeare of London*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1949. A readable biography fused with portraits of Stratford and London life.
- Clemen, Wolfgang H. *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951. (Originally published in German, 1936.) A temperate account of a subject often abused.
- Craig, Hardin. *An Interpretation of Shakespeare*. Columbia, Missouri: Lucas Brothers, 1948. A scholar's book designed for the layman. Comments on all the works.
- Dean, Leonard F. (ed.). *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957. Mostly mid-twentieth-century critical studies, covering Shakespeare's artistry.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. *Prefaces to Shakespeare*. 2 vols. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946-47. Essays on ten plays by a scholarly man of the theater.
- Harbage, Alfred. *As They Liked It*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947. A sensitive, long essay on Shakespeare, morality, and the audience's expectations.
- . *William Shakespeare: A Reader's Guide*. New York: Farrar, Straus, 1963. Extensive comments, scene by scene, on fourteen plays.
- Ridler, Anne Bradby (ed.). *Shakespeare Criticism, 1935-1960*. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1963. An excellent continuation of the anthology edited earlier by Miss Bradby (see above).
- Schoenbaum, S. *Shakespeare's Lives*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970. A review of the evidence, and an examination of many biographies, including those by Baconians and other heretics.
- . *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. A readable presentation of all that the documents tell us about Shakespeare.
- Smith, D. Nichol (ed.). *Shakespeare Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1916. A selection of criticism from 1623 to 1840, ranging from Ben Jonson to Thomas Carlyle.
- Spencer, Theodore. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942. Shakespeare's plays in relation to Elizabethan thought.
- Stoll, Elmer Edgar. *Shakespeare and Other Masters*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1940. Essays on tragedy, comedy, and aspects of dramaturgy, with special reference to some of Shakespeare's plays.
- Traversi, D. A. *An Approach to Shakespeare*. Rev. ed. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1956. An analysis of the plays, beginning with words, images, and themes, rather than with characters.
- Van Doren, Mark. *Shakespeare*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1939. Brief, perceptive readings of all of the plays.
- Whitaker, Virgil K. *Shakespeare's Use of Learning*. San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1953. A study of the relation of Shakespeare's reading to his development as a dramatist.

3. Shakespeare's Theater

- Adams, John Cranford. *The Globe Playhouse*. Rev. ed. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1961. A detailed conjecture about the physical characteristics of the theater Shakespeare often wrote for.
- Beckerman, Bernard. *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962. On the playhouse and on Elizabethan dramaturgy, acting, and staging.
- Chambers, E. K. *The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1923. Reprinted with corrections, 1945. A valuable reference work on theaters, theatrical companies, and staging at court.

- Gurr, Andrew. *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. On the acting companies, the actors, the playhouses, the stages, and the audiences.
- Harbage, Alfred. *Shakespeare's Audience*. New York: Columbia University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1941. A study of the size and nature of the theatrical public.
- Hodges, C. Walter. *The Globe Restored*. London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1953; New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1954. A well-illustrated and readable attempt to reconstruct the Globe Theatre.
- Kernodle, George R. *From Art to Theatre: Form and Convention in the Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944. Pioneering and stimulating work on the symbolic and cultural meanings of theater construction.
- Nagler, A. M. *Shakespeare's Stage*. Tr. by Ralph Manheim. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1958. An excellent brief introduction to the physical aspect of the playhouse.
- Smith, Irwin. *Shakespeare's Globe Playhouse*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957. Chiefly indebted to J. C. Adams' controversial book, with additional material and scale drawings for model-builders.
- Venezky, Alice S. *Pageantry on the Shakespearean Stage*. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1951. An examination of spectacle in Elizabethan drama.

4. Miscellaneous Reference Works

- Abbott, E. A. *A Shakespearean Grammar*. New edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1877. An examination of differences between Elizabethan and modern grammar.
- Berman, Ronald. *A Reader's Guide to Shakespeare's Plays*, rev. ed. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973. A short bibliography of the chief articles and books on each play.
- Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. 4 vols. Vols. 5 and 6 in preparation. New York: Columbia University Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1957-. A collection of many of the books Shakespeare drew upon.
- Campbell, Oscar James, and Edward G. Quinn. *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1966. More than 2,700 entries, from a few sentences to a few pages on everything related to Shakespeare.
- Greg, W. W. *The Shakespeare First Folio*. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1955. A detailed yet readable history of the first collection (1623) of Shakespeare's plays.
- Kökeritz, Helge. *Shakespeare's Names*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1959; London: Oxford University Press, 1960. A guide to the pronunciation of some 1,800 names appearing in Shakespeare.
- . *Shakespeare's Pronunciation*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1953. Contains much information about puns and rhymes.
- Linthicum, Marie C. *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1936. On the fabrics and dress of the age, and references to them in the plays.
- Muir, Kenneth. *Shakespeare's Sources*. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1957. Vol. 2 in preparation. The first volume, on the comedies and tragedies, attempts to ascertain what books were Shakespeare's sources, and what use he made of them.
- Onions, C. T. *A Shakespeare Glossary*. London: Oxford University Press, 1911; 2nd ed., rev., with enlarged addenda, 1953. Definitions of words (or senses of words) now obsolete.
- Partridge, Eric. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. Rev. ed. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1955. A glossary of bawdy words and references. Digitized by eGangotri
- Shakespeare Quarterly*. See headnote to Suggested References.

- Shakespeare Survey*. See headnote to Suggested References.
- Smith, Gordon Ross. *A Classified Shakespeare Bibliography 1936-1958*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1963. A list of some 20,000 items on Shakespeare.
- Spevack, Marvin. *The Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973. An index to Shakespeare's words.
- Bells, Stanley, ed. *Shakespeare: Select Bibliographies*. London: Oxford University Press, 1973. Seventeen essays surveying scholarship and criticism of Shakespeare's life, work, and theater.
5. *The Merchant of Venice*
- Barber, C. L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Barnet, Sylvan (ed.). *Twentieth Century Interpretations of "The Merchant of Venice"*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- . "Prodigality and Time in *The Merchant of Venice*," *PMLA*, 87 (1972), 26-30.
- Brown, John Russell (ed.). *The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*. 7th ed. rev. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955; London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1956.
- Brown, John Russell. "The Realization of Shylock: a Theatrical Criticism," *Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 3: Early Shakespeare*, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris. London: Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1961, pp. 187-209.
- Charlton, H. B. *Shakespearean Comedy*. 4th ed. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1949.
- Draper, John W. *Stratford to Dogberry*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1961.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, Vol. I. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946.
- Grebanier, Bernard. *The Truth about Shylock*. New York: Random House, 1962.
- Leggatt, Alexander. *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love*. London: Methuen & Co., 1974.
- Lewalski, Barbara K. "Biblical Allusion and Allegory in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XIII (1962), 327-43.
- Palmer, John L. *Comic Characters of Shakespeare*. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1946.
- Salinger, Leo. *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Sprague, Arthur Colby. *Shakespeare and the Actors*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1944.
- Stauffer, Donald A. *Shakespeare's World of Images*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1949.

